



The **Regulation** and
Quality Improvement
Authority

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2009-2012

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RQIA PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2009-2012

STRATEGIC VISION

The aim of this strategy is to enshrine the best practice principles of public participation in every aspect of our work. In doing so, we will create an exemplar organisation that listens to and incorporates the voice of the public in a meaningful way.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1. The RQIA will develop effective communication methods to meet the complex and varied needs of the Northern Ireland public.**
- 2. The RQIA will ensure that it is accessible in every aspect of its work to everyone in Northern Ireland.**
- 3. The RQIA will further develop and promote lay involvement and establish new and innovative methods of involving the public in its work.**
- 4. The RQIA will continue to work with and develop strategic partnerships with stakeholder bodies to support improvement in the quality of health and social care in Northern Ireland.**
- 5. The RQIA will promote and develop public participation through a range of relevant training and appropriate awareness-raising activities.**

ACTION PLAN

The RQIA will develop an action plan, through engagement with the public, which will identify public participation priorities for the period 2009-2012. These will be based on the five Strategic Objectives identified within this strategy.

INTRODUCTION

This Strategy outlines the main principles underpinning public participation within the work of the RQIA. It explains how the RQIA will engage the public in every aspect of its work. This includes: policy development, inspection and review of health and social care provision, and evaluation of quality to support improvement in services. The RQIA believes that through this approach, it will be in a position to ensure the public make a meaningful contribution to its work. The strategy will be underpinned by a Public Participation Action Plan - developed in partnership with stakeholders - which will guide our activities over the years ahead.

Public participation plays an important role in the work of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). Through listening to and acting on the views and opinions of the public, the RQIA will ensure that it responds to existing and emerging issues within health and social care (HSC). The RQIA aims to be more accessible, responsive and targeted in how it monitors and supports improvement in the quality of health and social care by engaging more effectively in public participation.

Through the strategy RQIA aims to ensure that participation is at the centre of its work by engaging with the public in a meaningful way. The Public Participation Strategy builds upon the existing participation, engagement and partnership approaches used throughout RQIA and provides a coordinated approach to public participation in the future.

The RQIA has developed this strategy using a collaborative approach. This has involved the establishment of a Public Participation Steering Group and an Advisory Group, with membership drawn from a wide range of stakeholders (see Appendix A), to oversee the development of the strategy. The RQIA believes that this strategy provides a solid basis for continued public participation in its work.

1. WHAT DOES THE RQIA DO?

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority is Northern Ireland's health and social care regulator and has responsibility to ensure the rights of people with a mental illness and those with a learning disability are protected.

1.1 The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) was established in 2005 under The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The RQIA is the independent body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and encouraging improvements in the quality of those services. The RQIA's responsibilities also include the quality of health and social care in prisons and young offender centres, and its responsibilities in the area of mental health and learning disability will increase in the year ahead. As part of the Review of Public Administration the functions of the Mental Health Commission - subject to legislation - will transfer to the RQIA in April 2009.

1.2 The RQIA's main functions are:

- to inspect the quality of the wide range of services provided by health and social care (HSC) bodies in Northern Ireland through reviews of clinical and social care governance arrangements, based on *The Quality Standards for Health and Social Care* (DHSSPS, March 2006).
- to regulate (register and inspect) health and social care services delivered by health and social care bodies and by the independent sector. These include nursing, residential care and children's homes; independent health care facilities; nursing agencies; adult placement agencies; day care settings; domiciliary care agencies; and residential family centres. The regulation of services is based on minimum care standards to ensure that service users know what quality of services they can expect to receive, and service providers have a benchmark against which to measure their quality.

Each year RQIA inspectors visit these services to examine all aspects of the care provided, to guarantee the safety, comfort and dignity of those using the facilities, and to ensure public confidence in these services. The RQIA produces reports following its announced and unannounced inspections. These reports are available to the public from the RQIA to inform them about the quality of services available in Northern Ireland.

- From April 2009, with the transfer of duties of the Mental Health Commission to the RQIA, under the Health and Social Care (Reform) Bill, we will undertake a new range of responsibilities for people with a mental illness and those with a learning disability. These include: 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 the patient's property.

The RQIA believes that through this work it will support improvements in health and social care for everyone in Northern Ireland.

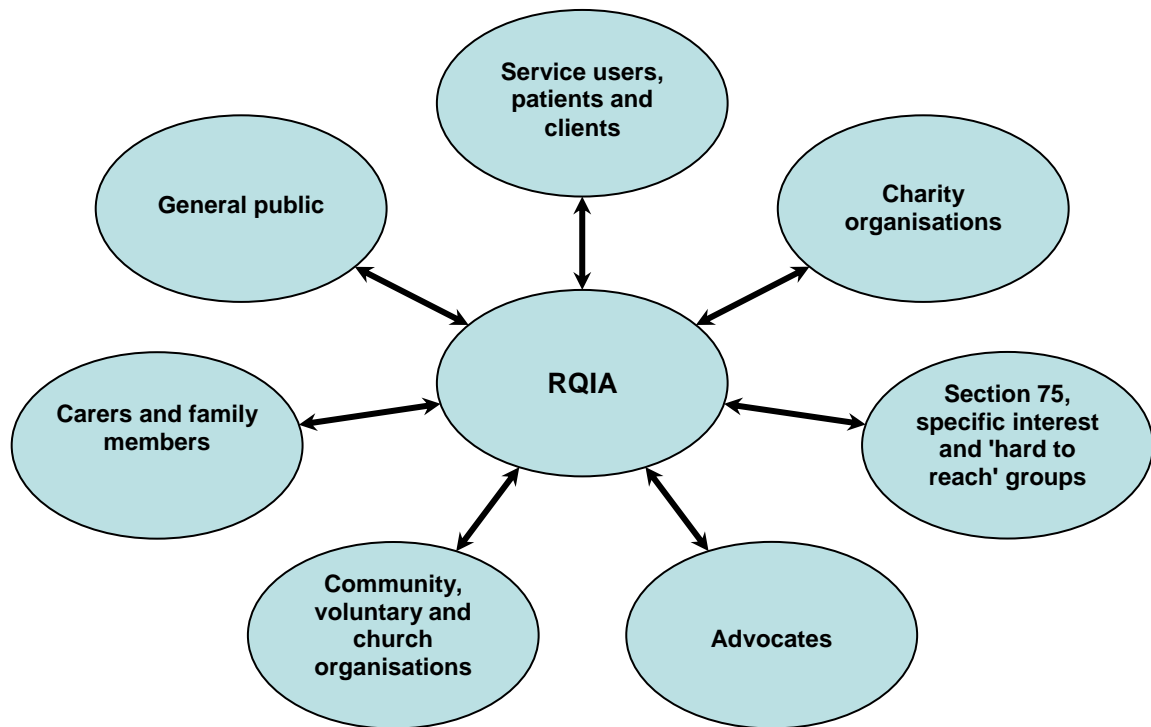
2. WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Public participation is the meaningful involvement of the public in our work.

- 2.1 Public participation has been identified as a key objective in RQIA's Corporate Plan 2006-2009, under the strategic theme *Developing people and partnerships*. It will also be a key theme within the RQIA's corporate strategy for 2009-2012.
- 2.2 The term 'public participation' is used to define the involvement of the public with and in the work of RQIA. By adopting a proactive approach to public participation, the RQIA will ensure that the public will contribute to the development of plans, policies and procedures, and to comment on the RQIA's performance in delivering on its identified objectives.

2.3 For the purposes of this strategy, the 'public' is defined as the population of Northern Ireland and is subdivided into categories that represent a wide range of interests. Many will be directly involved in the quality of health and social care in Northern Ireland, or are service users. While some of the groups listed below have a more direct and longer term relationship with health and social care services, the RQIA values the contribution of all members of the public. These include: service users, patients, clients, carers, family members, advocacy groups, charity organisations, community, voluntary and church organisations, 'hard to reach' groups and the general public.

2.4 The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the RQIA and sections of the population



2.5 This Public Participation Strategy is designed to address RQIA's engagement with the public. It explains how the RQIA engages with the public through all aspects of its work, including: policy development, inspection and review of health and social care provision, and evaluation of the quality of services. The RQIA's relationship with other stakeholders such as elected representatives, statutory organisations, service providers, other regulators, and professional bodies is handled through its ongoing engagement and communications activities.

2.6 The strategy aims to structure, enhance and develop public involvement in the work of the RQIA and takes account of *Strengthening user involvement in Northern Ireland: a summary and action plan* (2008), commissioned by the RQIA, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).

2.7 The Public Participation Strategy upholds the values and principles of RQIA.* These are:

The RQIA is:

- independent
- accessible
- inclusive
- accountable
- honest
- fair

The RQIA will:

- respect every person's right to timely, high quality care
- promote choice
- listen to and work with service users and providers
- encourage learning and innovation
- challenge practice where the need for change is demonstrated
- operate with integrity

2.8 The RQIA also aims to ensure that this strategy reflects the core values of DHSSPS's *Strengthening Personal and Public Involvement guidance* (2007) and principles of engagement outlined within the Health and Social Care (Reform) Bill. These include:

- dignity and respect
- inclusivity, equity and diversity
- collaboration and partnership
- transparency and openness

* RQIA Corporate Plan 2006-2009

3. COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

The RQIA will develop effective communication methods to meet the complex and varied needs of the Northern Ireland public.

- 3.1 The RQIA values the contribution that the public can make to its work. Through the Public Participation Strategy the RQIA will adopt a partnership approach to ensure meaningful communication with the public. The RQIA interacts with a wide range of different groups and each of these groups has different communication needs. Through a public participation action plan the RQIA will work to ensure that the specific needs of different sections of the public are identified and addressed in an appropriate manner.
- 3.2 RQIA will focus on building relationships and developing appropriate mechanisms for communication with the public, ensuring this includes 'hard to reach' and vulnerable groups who are often major users of health and social care services. Where appropriate, the RQIA will use advocacy groups to access views. A variety of methods will be developed to ensure the widest possible engagement with the public through accessible meetings, workshops, networking events, information sessions, and the use of electronic and audio communication, pictures and recognised symbols and the written word in appropriate formats.
- 3.3 RQIA will produce accessible and relevant information and communication in easy to read, audio and other accessible formats. Accessibility standards will be applied to all information that is publicly available, for example through the use of plain English. RQIA will keep the user-accessibility of its website under review. RQIA will also work to meet the information needs of those members of the public with disabilities.

- 3.4 RQIA will publish inspection reports in user-friendly language and formats. Service users in all their diversity and their representatives will be surveyed to gather views about services as a part of the preparation for inspection visits. These visits will also consider the measures that providers have taken to consult with users about the service.
- 3.5 The RQIA will identify appropriate methods to engage with and gather the views of patients, clients, staff, user, carer groups and others in all areas of its work.
- 3.6 In line with best practice RQIA will provide timely feedback to all those who participate in its work using appropriate methods. To ensure this happens, the following steps will be taken:
- a review of current feedback mechanisms to identify and address any limitations.
 - a set of principles will be developed to provide guidance to all staff involved in formal or informal consultation to ensure consistent approach to providing feedback to the public, appropriate to the needs of the audience.

4. ACCESSIBILITY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

The RQIA will ensure that it is accessible in every aspect of its work to everyone in Northern Ireland.

- 4.1 The RQIA aims to establish a long and meaningful relationship with the public. In so doing it will consider and keep under review how it can ensure that the public has access to the RQIA through its public participation activities. This will include reviewing practical issues that may be a barrier to engagement.

4.2 RQIA will:

- conduct an accessibility audit.
- identify needs and develop appropriate policies and protocols to ensure accessibility of relevant information to all members of the public in an open and transparent manner.
- consider accessibility of venues and the use of appropriate communication methods when organising meeting and events.
- provide specific training on accessibility for staff who engage in public consultation.

5. LAY INVOLVEMENT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

The RQIA will further develop and promote lay involvement and establish new and innovative methods of involving the public in its work.

5.1 Lay involvement plays a vital role in the work of RQIA. Public participation brings a valuable perspective which strengthens reviews, inspections and internal decision making process. RQIA is committed to:

- developing the use of lay involvement in both reviews and inspections.
- identifying new ways of including a lay perspective in the RQIA review and inspection processes.
- providing training to support lay involvement in RQIA's work.
- identifying new ways to promote the role of lay people in the RQIA's work and attracting a representative cross-section of the public from across Northern Ireland.
- developing agreed protocols for lay involvement in all areas of the RQIA's work, including: lay reviewers, service users, patients, clients, carers, family members, advocacy groups, charities, community, voluntary and church groups, hard to reach groups and the general public.
- promote the status of lay involvement in the work of RQIA

6. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

The RQIA will continue to work with and develop strategic partnerships with stakeholder bodies to support improvement in the quality of health and social care in Northern Ireland.

- 6.1 The RQIA is committed to working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. Other opportunities for partnership will be actively sought with groups with similar or shared interests. This will ensure the effective sharing of information and knowledge through information events, conferences, workshops, and seminars.
- 6.2 The RQIA also works in partnership with other health and social care regulators throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland to ensure that best practice is shared. It has also developed strong links with The Queen's University of Belfast, The University of Ulster and Anglia Ruskin University to establish a culture of continued learning.
- 6.3 The RQIA also has a number of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and protocols in place with partnership organisations. These include:
 - National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS)
 - Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
 - Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
 - HM Inspector of Prisons (HMIP) and Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI)
- 6.4 A joint RQIA, NISCC and SCIE participation group has been established to take forward areas of common interest. The RQIA and the MHC are working in partnership in the area of mental health and learning disability.

7. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

The RQIA will promote and develop public participation through a range of relevant training and appropriate awareness-raising activities.

- 7.1 Training and awareness are crucial to good consultation and engagement, and ensuring that public participation is included in all aspects of the RQIA's work. The RQIA will:
- provide appropriate training for new and existing staff on the role and implementation of the public participation strategy.
 - in partnership with relevant bodies, provide training to staff to involve stakeholders in its activities
 - identify staff training needs through the appraisal process to ensure that staff are fully engaged with the concept of public participation.
 - develop presentations and general information to advise stakeholder groups of the role and work of the RQIA and how they may engage with the RQIA on the development of policy and the delivery of services.
 - identify resources to provide a comprehensive training programme

8. ACTION PLANNING

The RQIA will develop an action plan, through engagement with the public, which will identify public participation priorities for the period 2009-2012. These will be based on the five Strategic Objectives identified within this strategy.

- 8.1 The RQIA will produce an action plan for its public participation activity. It may be necessary to produce separate action plans that relate to specific areas of work to ensure that the actions are targeted and developed in partnership with relevant groups.
- 8.2 The action planning process will be carried out in conjunction with the public, and will include:
- views gathered during the consultation process being incorporated, where appropriate.
 - an action planning workshop between the public participation steering, advisory groups and other stakeholders to agree the areas to be targeted.
 - actions being planned over a three-year cycle. In each year, the RQIA will set out what public participation objectives it wishes to achieve and how it plans to progress these.
 - establishing sub-groups to agree specific action plans.
 - agreeing the Public Participation Action Plan with the RQIA's Executive Team and Board.
 - all aspects of the RQIA's work and actions will be progressed in partnership with affected groups, as appropriate.
 - use of innovative methods of action planning, for example, through the use of e-mail and the RQIA website.
- 8.3 The Action Plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed annually. The RQIA will report progress through quarterly reports to its Board, the DHSSPS and publish details of its-public participation activity in its Annual Report and Accounts.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The RQIA will monitor and evaluate all public participation activity through its annual business plans and report progress in its quarterly and annual reports.

9.1 The RQIA's Public Participation Strategy provides the basis for the development of an action plan. It will identify clear achievable and measurable goals and will be reflected in RQIA's business and corporate plans. The action plan will be monitored and evaluated by the RQIA Executive Team and Board on an ongoing basis to identify whether the strategy has a measurable effect on public participation and engagement RQIA will:

- include clear and measurable monitoring and evaluation criteria in the Public Participation Action Plan
- devise new methods of monitoring the level of public participation during review and inspection activity taking into account Section 75 duties through its information system.
- report on public participation activity in the Annual Report and Accounts.
- monitor the accessibility and quality of its published information.

10. COMPLAINTS

The RQIA will monitor complaints to ensure that all issues relating to the public are dealt with in line with its Complaints Policy.

10.1 An essential part of any engagement with the public is an effective and accessible complaints procedure. The RQIA has developed a complaints procedure, which will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to be accessible and useful to those who need to use it. Where relevant, the RQIA will work in partnership with other health and social care bodies, which will make it possible for all relevant complaints to be effectively investigated and acted upon by the RQIA.

11. EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

The RQIA is committed to ensuring that it complies with its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

11.1 Within this strategy, the RQIA will have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without. The RQIA will also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. These duties will include taking into account the particular needs of those with different disabilities whether physical, sensory, learning or mental health. It will also take into account the differing needs of particular groups within the minority ethnic communities such as migrant workers, Irish Travellers and established communities.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 RQIA believes that a user-focused public participation strategy is essential in taking forward its work. This strategy is the beginning of a long-term dialogue between the RQIA and the public. By developing strong relationships and taking into consideration the needs of the public during the planning and implementation of its work, the RQIA can further enhance and support improvements in the quality of health and social care throughout Northern Ireland.

For further information, please contact:

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Appendix I

Public Participation Steering Group (RQIA Board Members and Staff)

Roisin Kelly - Public Participation Manager (Chair)
John Black - Governance Team Manager
Jackie Callan - Senior Quality Reviewer
Malachy Finnegan - Communication Manager
Dame Joan Harbison - Board Member
Jayne Humphreys - Administration Manager
Lillian Jennett - Board Member
Connor Mulholland - Board Member
Theresa Nixon - Director of Quality Improvement
Dermot Parsons - Agencies Team Manager
David Stewart - Director of Service Improvement and Medical Director
John Stewart - Director of Corporate Services

Public Participation Advisory Group

Dame Joan Harbison - RQIA Board Member (Advisory Group Chair)
Claire Armstrong - Asthma UK (Long term conditions alliance)
Tom Cairns - Age Concern
Yvonne Cowan - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Marie Crossin - CAUSE
Bridget Dougan - RQIA Project Manager
Martin Duffy - Western Health and Social Services Board
Mary Henderson - Relatives Association
Zoe Hunter - RQIA Project Manager
Amanda Jackson - RQIA Inspector
Claire Lavery - RNID
Indira Lugee - Indian Community Centre
PA MacLochlainn - Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO)
Marie Marley - RQIA Inspector
Gerry Marshall - RQIA Inspector
Mary McClean - RQIA Project Manager
Paul McGowan - Mencap
Mary Morrison - Carers Northern Ireland
Jayne Murray - Long term conditions alliance/Diabetes
Philip O'Hara - RQIA Inspector
Jude O'Neill - RQIA Mental Health and Learning Disability Team Manager
Robert Stewart - Mental Health Commission

Appendix II

Consultation workshops and meeting

Alzheimer's Society
British Medical Association
Cancer Network Northern Ireland
Diabetes UK - Consultation workshop
Eastern Health and Social Services Council
Inner East Local Commissioning Group
Mental Health and Learning Disability workshop
Mental Health Commission Chairman
North East Local Commissioning Group
North West Community Network
Public Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide (PIPS)
Reaching Across to Reduce Your Risk of Suicide (RAYS)
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority staff
Rural Community Network
Southern Health and Social Services Board Community Development and Equality Manager
Western Health and Social Services Council

Written responses to the consultation document

Belfast Health Action Zone
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
British Association of Social Workers
Corkhill Care Centre
DHSSPS - Physical and Sensory Disability Unit
Diabetes UK
Health and Social Care Councils
Help the Aged
Lay Reviewers
Mencap
Mental Health Commission
Northern Health and Social Care Trust (CSCG manager)
Northern Health and Social Services Board
North West Community Network
Omagh District Council
Pfizer
Royal College of Midwives
Royal College of Nursing Northern Ireland
Rural Community Network
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (Community Development and Health Coordinator)
University of Ulster
Western Health and Social Care Trust
Western Health and Social Services Board