PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

DRAFT - FOR CONSULTATION

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Approved by:
Date:

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INTRODUCTION

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, RQIA will ensure that it responds to existing and emerging issues within health and social care (HSC). RQIA will aim to be more accessible, responsive and targeted in how it monitors the quality of health and social care by engaging more effectively in public participation. RQIA will ensure that participation is at the centre of its work by engaging with the public in a meaningful way. The Public Participation Strategy will build upon the existing participation, engagement and partnership approaches used throughout RQIA and will provide a co-ordinated approach to public participation in the future.

RQIA has developed this draft 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. RQIA believes that this draft strategy will ensure a solid basis for continued public participation in its work.

1. WHAT DOES RQIA DO?

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. 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. RQIA responsibilities also include the quality of health and social care in prisons and young offender centres. RQIA's 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 consultation - will transfer to RQIA in April 2009.

1.2 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. RQIA produces reports following its announced and unannounced inspections. These reports are available to the public from RQIA to inform them about the quality of services available in Northern Ireland.

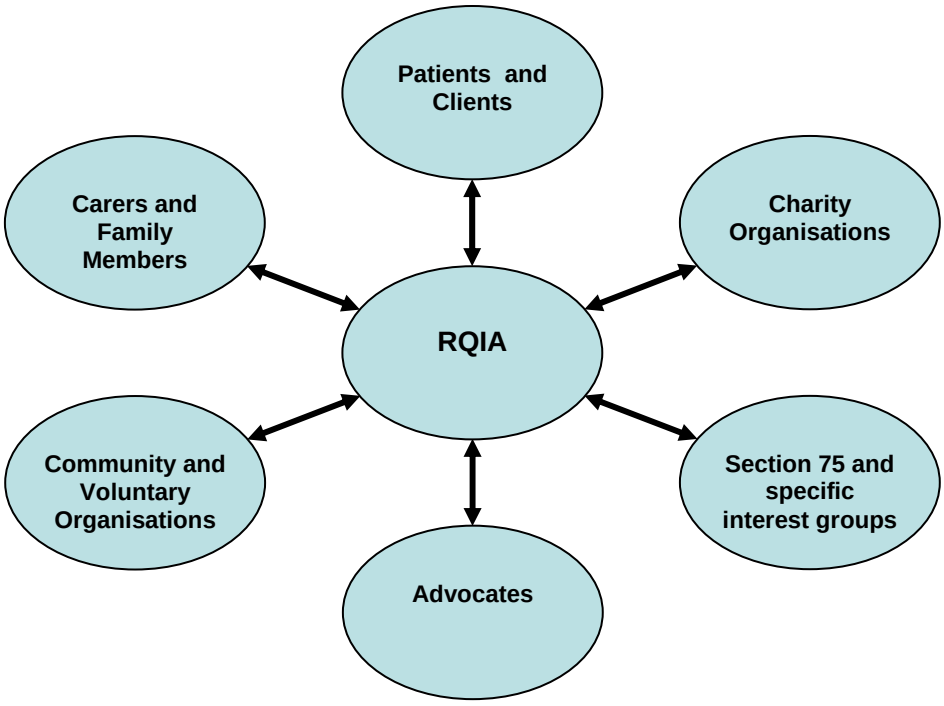
2. WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

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*.

2.2 The term 'public participation' is used to define the involvement of the public with and in the work of an organisation. It is an attempt to ensure that RQIA meets the expectations of the public in respect of its remit. It will also allow the public an opportunity to contribute to the development of RQIA's plans, policies and procedures, and to comment on its 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. Many will be directly involved in the quality of health and social care in Northern Ireland, or use these services. This includes: service users, patients, clients, carers, family members, advocacy groups, charity organisations, community and voluntary organisations.

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



2.5 RQIA's Public Participation Strategy is intended to explain how it engages with the public through all aspects of its work, including: policy development, inspection and review of health and social care provision, and an evaluation of the quality of services.

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

2.7 The development of this Public Participation Strategy will uphold the values and principles of RQIA. These are:

RQIA is:
- independent
- accessible
- inclusive
- accountable
- honest
- fair

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 RQIA also aims to ensure that this strategy reflects the core values of DHSSPS's *Strengthening Personal and Public Involvement guidance* (2007). These are:

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

QUESTIONS

2(a) Do you agree with RQIA's definition of Public Participation?

2(b) Are there any groups have not been identified as a 'public' by RQIA? Please make suggestions.

2(c) Is 'public participation' the correct term to describe this area of work?
(other terms used to describe this area of work include: Public Involvement , Service User Engagement, Personal and Public Involvement)

2(d) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

3. COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC

3.1 RQIA values the contribution that the public can make to its work. Through the Public Participation Strategy RQIA will adopt a partnership approach to ensure meaningful communication with the public. RQIA interacts with a wide range of different groups and each of these groups has different communication needs. Through a public participation action plan RQIA will aim to ensure that the specific needs of different sections of the public are identified and addressed.

3.2 RQIA will endeavour to 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, 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 meetings, workshops, networking events, information sessions, electronic and audio communication and the written word in appropriate formats.

3.3 RQIA will aim to produce accessible and relevant information and communication in easy to read, audio and other 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 endeavour 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 Through the Public Participation Strategy RQIA will consider the process of engagement with the public during its inspections and reviews to identify the most appropriate methods to engage with, and gather the views of, patients, clients, staff, user and carer groups. This will form the basis of future public participation activity during reviews.

3.6 In line with best practice RQIA will endeavour to provide 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.

QUESTIONS

3(a) Are there any other ways you would like RQIA to communicate with you?

3(b) Would you like RQIA to use any other methods of establishing and developing relationships with the public?

3(c) How would you like RQIA to provide you with feedback?

3(d) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

4. ACCESSIBILITY

4.1 RQIA aims to establish a long and lasting 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.
- consider accessibility for all when organising meeting and events.
- provide specific training on accessibility for staff who engage in public consultation.

QUESTIONS

4(a) Are there any issues around accessibility you would like us to consider?

4(b) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

5. LAY REVIEWERS

5.1 Lay reviewers play a vital role in the work of RQIA. They bring a valuable laypersons/users perspective to reviews and inspections. RQIA is committed to:

- developing the use of lay reviewers in both reviews and inspections.
- identifying new ways of working with lay reviewers during the review and inspection process.
- supporting lay reviewers through training.

- developing agreed protocols for the use of lay reviewers throughout the work of RQIA.
- identifying new ways to promote the role of the lay reviewer and attracting a representative cross-section of the public.

QUESTIONS

5(a) Do you understand the role of lay reviewers in RQIA?

5(b) Do you have any suggestions to further develop the role of lay reviewers within RQIA?

5(c) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

6. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

6.1 Training and awareness are crucial to good consultation and engagement, and ensuring that public participation is included in all aspects of RQIA's work. RQIA will:

- provide relevant public participation training through staff induction.
- work in partnership with relevant bodies to provide training to RQIA staff.
- 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 RQIA and how they may engage with RQIA on the development of policy and the delivery of services.

QUESTIONS

6(a) Are there any other issues in relation to training and awareness that you would like RQIA to consider as part of the Public Participation Strategy?

6(b) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

7. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

7.1 RQIA has a number of 'memoranda of understanding' (MoUs) in place with partnership organisations. These are:

- o The Mental Health Commission (MHC)
- o Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
- o Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

7.2 A joint RQIA, NISCC and SCIE participation group has been established to consider areas of common interest. RQIA and the MHC are working in partnership in the area of mental health and learning disability.

7.3 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 and The University of Ulster to establish a culture of continued learning.

7.4 Other opportunities for partnership will be sought with groups with similar or shared interests. This will ensure the effective sharing of information and knowledge. For example, these may include such things as: information events, conferences, workshops, and seminars.

QUESTIONS

7(a) Are there any other issues in relation to working in partnership that you would like RQIA to consider as part of the Public Participation Strategy?

7(b) Are there any other organisations that RQIA should develop partnerships with?

7(c) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1 This Public Participation Strategy will provide 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 Plan. The action plan will be monitored and evaluated by 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:

- 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.
- monitor the accessibility and quality of its published information as part of the communication strategy.
- report on its public participation activity in its Annual Report.

QUESTIONS

8(a) Do you agree with the approach for monitoring and evaluation of RQIA's Public Participation Strategy outlined above?

8(b) Are there any other issues in relation to monitoring and evaluation that you would like RQIA to consider as part of the Public Participation Strategy?

8(c) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

9. ACTION PLANNING

9.1 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.

9.2 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 and advisory groups to agree the areas to be targeted.
- actions being planned over a three-year cycle. In each year 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 RQIA's Executive Team and Board.
- all aspects of 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 RQIA's website and e-mail.

9.3 The Action Plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed annually. RQIA will publish its progress on public participation activity in its Annual Report and Accounts.

QUESTIONS

9(a) Do you agree with the approach structure for the development of the Action Plan outlined above?

9(b) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

10. EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 RQIA is committed to ensuring that it complies with its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Within this strategy, 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. 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. Further information on equality considerations and questions is included at Appendix B.

11. COMPLAINTS

11.1 An essential part of any engagement with the public is an effective and accessible complaints procedure. 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, RQIA will work in partnership with other health and social care bodies to provide coherent complaint responses, which will make it possible for all relevant complaints to be effectively collated and acted upon by RQIA.

QUESTIONS

11(a) Are there any other issues in relation to complaints that you would like RQIA to consider as part of the Public Participation Strategy?

11(b) Are there any other comments you would like to make on this section?

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 conversation between 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 RQIA can further enhance the quality of health and social care throughout Northern Ireland.

QUESTIONS

12(a) Do you have any other suggestions or comments on any aspect of this strategy? If so, we would be happy to hear your views.

For further information, please contact:
Roisin Kelly, RQIA Public Participation Manager

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email: roisin.kelly@rqia.org.uk

Appendix A

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 Mullholland - 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 B

Equality Considerations and Questions

1.1 Northern Ireland Act 1998

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 there is a legal requirement for RQIA to consider the possible impact of all its decisions on the specified equality groups and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in all areas of our work.
RQIA has to consider how to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the following nine equality groups:

- religious belief
- sexual orientation
- political opinion
- gender
- racial group
- disability (those with a disability and those without)
- age
- dependency (those with dependants and those without)
- marital status.

RQIA must also consider how to promote good relations in respect of three groups:

- religious belief
- political opinion
- racial group.

1.2 The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal status in UK law to fundamental human rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Act is about respecting and fostering the Convention Rights in everything we do. Public bodies now have a statutory duty to ensure that their decisions and actions are compatible with ECHR and to act in accordance with these rights. What is more, we need to be proactive in ensuring that we comply with our obligations and ensure that we develop a human rights culture. The Act gives people a right to redress in a UK court if they think that their human rights have been violated by a public authority.

1.3 Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (DDA)

Under the most recent amendment of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, that came into effect in January 2007, public authorities, in all areas of their work must now consider how to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

1.4 Equality Screening Exercise

As part of the development of the Public Participation Strategy an Equality Screening Exercise was carried out. This exercise indicated that this strategy will have an impact on a number of the nine Section 75 equality categories.

Given that this is a regional strategy aimed at the general public as well as identifying a range of diverse stakeholders, the information used to inform the screening exercise was based on evidence gathered from a range of published sources and the professional knowledge of RQIA staff and Board members. The screening was quality assured by the Public Participation Advisory Group which includes a wide range of RQIA stakeholder groups.

The initial Equality Screening indicated that the following categories have specific needs in relation to RQIA's Public Participation Strategy:

- Gender
- Age
- Dependant Status
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Sexual Orientation

Equality Questions

RQIA would be grateful if you could take some time to answer the questions below.

1. Does the Public Participation Strategy adequately address the needs of Section 75 categories in relation to participation and engagement with RQIA? (See draft Public Participation Strategy, section 2 *"What is Public Participation?"*, paragraphs 2.7 - 2.9, and section 3 *"Communicating with the Public", paragraphs* 3.1 - 3.6).

2. Are the measures identified in section 3 of the draft Public Participation Strategy *"Communicating with the Public"*, paragraphs 3.3 - 3.4 adequate to meet the information needs of:

   - people with a sensory disability
   - people from a diverse ethnic background
   - younger people
   - people with a disability
   - people of different sexual orientations

   Please comment.

3. Do the measures in section 3 of the draft Public Participation Strategy *"Communicating with the Public"*, paragraph 3.6, adequately meet the feedback needs of the following Section 75 categories:

   - Gender
   - Age
   - Dependant Status
   - Disability
   - Ethnicity
   - Sexual Orientation

   Please comment.

4. Has the strategy identified all areas where RQIA should consider the accessibility needs of:

   - people with a disability
   - people who have caring responsibilities
   - people of different genders
   - people from different ethnic backgrounds
   - any other Section 75 group not listed

   Please comment.

5. Do the proposals for Lay Reviewers in section 5 of the draft Public Participation Strategy meet the needs of:

   - younger people
   - people with mental health or learning disability
   - people of different sexual orientation
   - people of different genders
   - carers
   - people from different ethnic backgrounds

   Please comment.

6. Are their any additional measures that RQIA can take to meet the needs of Section 75 categories during Action Planning (section 9, draft Public Participation strategy)?

7. If you have any additional comments that relating to Section 75 considerations that have not been identified above, please comment.

If you require any assistance or clarification please contact:
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