



**Informing and Improving
Health and Social Care**



**The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority**



The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Who We Are

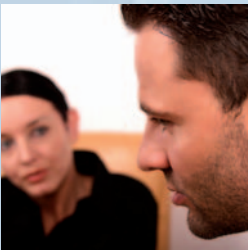
The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent body responsible for regulating and inspecting the quality and availability of Northern Ireland's health and social care services. We were established in 2005 under The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement 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 Health and Social Care (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.



Our key strategic priorities are:

- Improving care
- Informing the population
- Safeguarding rights
- Influencing policy



Improving Care

Inspection

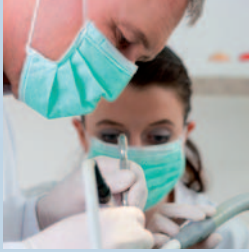
RQIA registers and inspects a wide range of health and social care services. These include:

- nursing homes
- residential care homes
- children's homes
- day care settings
- independent health care
 - private dental services
 - independent hospitals
 - independent hospices
 - independent clinics
 - clinics providing certain laser or intense pulse light (IPL) cosmetic treatments
- adult placement agencies
- domiciliary care agencies
- nursing agencies
- residential family centres
- voluntary adoption agencies
- school boarding departments (inspected only)

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 announced and unannounced inspections we assess the quality of the services provided against minimum 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 and 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 includes the issue of notices of failure to comply with regulations; placing conditions of registration; imposing fines; or closing a service.



Improving Care

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 to the service provider. 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.



Infection Prevention/Hygiene Inspections

RQIA undertakes announced and unannounced infection prevention/hygiene inspections at a range of health and social care facilities, including hospital wards and clinical areas.



Our inspections provide an overview of a ward or clinical area on the day of inspection, highlighting to service managers both good practice and areas of concern. This allows us to ensure improvements are made for those using these facilities and services.

Mental Health and Learning Disability

RQIA also has a specific responsibility to assess the health and social care services provided to people with a mental illness 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. This informs a wider programme of announced and unannounced inspections of these services. Using a human rights based approach to inspection, we examine the quality of these services, and make recommendations for improvement.

Radiology Inspections (IR(ME)R)

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

Our inspectors examine and report on arrangements in diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine, and radiotherapy departments in hospitals, dental practices and chiropractic services.

Informing the Population

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 our published inspection and review reports for HSC services.

This information, including 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. As part of our inspections and reviews of services, we listen to the views of people who use these services. These views form an important part of our reports on the quality of health and social care services.



Safeguarding Rights

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 services 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.



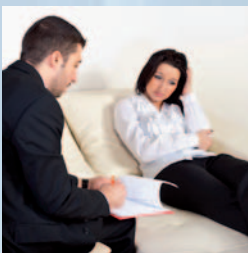
RQIA's Role in Places of Detention

RQIA is responsible for the oversight of health and social care in prisons, children's secure accommodation and mental health and learning disabled facilities. Given this role, RQIA has been designated as a national preventive mechanism by the UK government to ensure the protection of the rights of those in places of detention.



Influencing Policy

Many of our inspection and review reports contain recommendations which 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.



Feedback and Complaints

Complaints about Health and Social Care Services

If you have a complaint about a regulated health and social care service, in the first instance you should raise this directly with the service provider. They should aim to resolve the complaint locally, and where necessary they may involve the commissioner of the service (generally the local health and social care trust).

If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, you may refer your complaint to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

If your complaint relates to a potential breach of regulations or associated standards RQIA will make sure these are appropriately investigated, and where necessary addressed by the care provider.

Feedback and Complaints about RQIA

RQIA welcomes your feedback - by email, phone or in writing - on all aspects of our work to ensure continued improvement in the quality of the service we provide.

We are committed to responding to feedback and addressing complaints in a timely and effective manner, and learning from them to improve RQIA as an organisation.

Contact Us

You can contact us at:

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