



‘HOME TRUTHS’

A STOCKTAKE OF ACTIONS TAKEN AND PROGRESS MADE

A Review by RQIA

September 2022

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Introduction and Context

The Home Truths Report was published in June 2018 by the Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland (COPNI). It sets out the Commissioner's findings and recommendations from his investigation into Dunmurry Manor Care Home.

Since the publication of Home Truths, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and COPNI have been developing a positive working relationship with the shared objective of improving the safety and quality of care in Care Homes across Northern Ireland.

This is a vital and continuing endeavour. Progress has been made, and it has been agreed together that it is helpful to take stock of what has been achieved so far; and what is being tackled currently.

This Review gives an overview and an opportunity to recognise and reflect on what has been achieved, and to ensure progress is sustained by reinforcing our commitment to working partnership to improve further.

RQIA very much welcomes the opportunity to work with COPNI and to engage with service users, their families and all those who care about and support them. We want to ensure improvements are tangible, and demonstrate the impact of the work since the publication of Home Truths. Most importantly, that this work is making living in Care Homes better and safer for everyone.

The document sets out the actions specific to RQIA (within the Appendix), but starts with an update on progress made against the key themes identified in Home Truths, providing a short narrative of the actions taken in respect of each. This is followed by a number of examples of the work taken forward in changing practice and refers to some of the additional steps being taken now to make further improvement.

This Review provides a benchmark for recognising the progress made and identifying what more that can be done, not only to learn from the findings of the Home Truths Report, but to apply that learning in practice, day by day.

The Recommendations from the Home Truths Report

There were 59 recommendations in the Home Truths Report. Nine of these fell to RQIA as service regulator for Care Homes in Northern Ireland (see Appendix 1). RQIA regulates a wide range of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and several of the Home Truths recommendations, and the actions taken, have benefits for residents, service users and families both in Care Homes and in other services. A full list of all 59 Recommendations and the actions taken across organisations is published in [The Commissioner's view: A summary of the responses to Home Truths](#) (January 2020). Progress made against each of the themes identified in the Home Truths Report is set out below.

PROGRESS REPORT

Working with Service Users, Families and their Representatives

Crucially, the COPNI Home Truths Report reiterates the essential role of family and carers in the well-being of residents and service users, and the need for their lived experience to be heard and acted upon in regulatory work. RQIA accepts and endorses this. We have taken a number of steps to improve service user and family involvement:

- In late 2020 RQIA established a working relationship with the representatives of Care Home Advice Support Northern Ireland (CHASNI) – which had been developed by families as a result of the Home Truths report. This has strongly influenced RQIA's approach to how it engages with families, carers; and how it is informed by their perspectives and knowledge.
- We now liaise with the Patient Client Council (PCC) in particular through the Care Homes Visiting Platform, to build connections and expand dialogue about issues and experience relating to care homes.
- RQIA is refreshing and relaunching our Lay Assessor's Initiative. PCC and others are working alongside RQIA to further develop and support this role. This will bring a focus to the inspection in the Care Home, with a Lay member of the inspection team dedicated to listening to the views and experience of the residents and of their families, and ensuring this is taken into account in Inspection Reports and in the actions we take. We plan to begin to test this approach, evaluate and adjust it, from late 2022.
- We ensure that in our Inspection Reports of each Care Home, our engagement with residents and their families is documented and their experience, as provided to us, is reflected upon in undertaking our inspection work. The role of the Lay Assessor will enhance this further.

- We established a 'Guidance Team' in RQIA to take telephone calls or emails from anyone who wants to raise a concern with us. The team is contactable weekdays 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. Last year (2021-22), we received 1,500 calls or contacts about Care Homes, a third of these were from service users, families or members of the public.

During 2022-23 we are planning to:

- Encourage service providers to provide information to residents and families that an Inspection has taken place, and share its findings and the actions taken or planned as a result.
- Publish a list of all Care Homes inspected each month, in advance of the Inspection Report being published, so that residents, families, public and others know an Inspection has taken place and can raise any concerns with us, while the Report is being prepared for publication.
- Provide a focused section in our Annual Report of findings and actions taken in relation to Care Homes, which will be shared with families and representatives through involvement event/s.

Working with Providers and Commissioners

- We have established a regular meeting with the Independent Home Care Providers (IHCP), as a representative body of Independent Care providers. Meetings (usually weekly) also include senior staff from the Public Health Agency (PHA), and Department of Health (DoH), including the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG). This provides an opportunity to discuss policy issues and challenges, help with shared understanding and communications, and find ways forward.
- RQIA provides a central point of contact for the distribution of all communications on policy, COVID-19 and other issues for the wider health and social care system via our corporate communications, including providing information to all independent providers, including Care Homes.
- HSC Trusts are important in the commissioning, contracting and oversight of the quality of care provided to their funded residents in Care Homes. RQIA has established an RQIA/Trust Liaison Group with each of the five HSC Trusts, to share information and agree joint / complementary actions in relation to issues identified in specific care homes. Regular communication with Trust colleagues continues between meetings to address any new or immediate issues.
- RQIA has built an effective working relationship, meeting regularly and reviewing progress made since the Home Truths Report. The Commissioner for Older People continues to alert RQIA to information arising from individuals who seek his assistance with care home matters.

- RQIA staff continue to contribute to the ‘My Home Life’ Programme delivered by Ulster University to Care Home Managers. ‘My Home Life’ is part of an initiative that promotes quality of life and delivery of positive change for care homes for older people. The Programme also focuses on the development of the care home manager and their leadership to increase positive cultural change in their care homes.

Approach to Registration, Regulation and Inspection

- During 2020, RQIA commissioned an academic benchmarking report by Queen’s University Belfast, which set out evidence of effective regulatory systems available from the existing relevant academic literature. As a result we have set out to review our Regulation Framework, examining:
 - how we use our information / intelligence to inform a risk-based approach to assessment; and
 - our approach to planning an Inspection, to ensure each Inspection process reflects the risk assessment of the service, probes key issues and is effectively planned.

The review is also considering:

- our approach to regulatory actions including enforcement, to ensure it is proportionate (firm but fair), consistent and effective; and
 - the most effective involvement of service users, providers and others as we take forward this reform programme.
- We have established a Registration Improvement Project to ensure we streamline the process and effectively assess applications, whether for new registrations or for changes to existing registrations, scrutinising them thoroughly and efficiently.
 - Almost all of our care homes inspections are unannounced (98% in 2021-22), with one third of Nursing Homes inspections conducted entirely or partially, out of hours.
 - We continue to maintain a web-based portal that enables Care Home managers to submit information about the Care Home on a daily basis. This information is shared across the HSC services to enable a collective response to support for Care Homes.

Safeguarding

- The Home Truths Report recommended more work needed to be undertaken on the policy direction and guidance for both the overt and covert use of CCTV. RQIA commissioned Queen's University Belfast to undertake a study to guide future deployment of CCTV, the outcome of which was published on our website and shared with the DoH. RQIA also have published Guidance on the use of Overt Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV) for the Purpose of Surveillance in Regulated Establishments and Agencies.
- Human Rights Training is now mandatory for all RQIA staff, with an initial programme in 2018-19. This was refreshed in 2022 with the support of the University of Bristol Human Rights Implementation Centre. We are now working to incorporate Human Rights Training into induction for all new staff.

Leadership and Strategic Direction

- The Interim Chair and Authority Members are committed to working in partnership with all RQIA stakeholders, to keep people safe and to raise standards in health and social care, using the Authority's regulatory powers to drive improvement.
- RQIA's draft Strategic Plan 2022-27 and Actions for Delivery moves towards a focus on outcomes. We are ensuring that our regulatory systems and processes are robust; that we improve safety and quality across health and social care services by assessing service compliance against standards and that as a consequence, standards in services are raised and the experience of those using care services is improved. The draft Strategic Plan demonstrates a continued focus on achieving improvement for those who live in Care Homes and for service users across all sectors. It is now open to a 12 week public consultation process (closing on 17 November 2022).

Practical Examples of What the Action Taken Means in Practice

Case Studies

Duty of Candour/ Acting on Concerns

The Home Truths report recommended that a Duty of Candour must be introduced to provide a transparent and meaningful learning process from complaints (Recommendation 53).

Duty of Candour Update

The Department of Health has held an extensive public Consultation on proposals for a statutory Duty of Candour, both for individuals and for organisations. RQIA provided a response to the consultation, supporting an organisational Duty of Candour. A copy of our response is published on [our website](#).

Listening and Acting

To make sure that those who have concerns about services can get heard, RQIA has established a 'Guidance Team'. This is a helpdesk / listening service that anyone can contact by telephone or email. Our Team will listen to the issue and provide guidance, or take forward further investigation with our team of inspectors.

In Practice: RQIA Guidance Team

- RQIA's Guidance Team is staffed by both administrative staff and Inspectors.
- It is open to all telephone callers, Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.00pm.
- The Team respond to concerns received from family members, whistleblowing from care staff, and other information received in an open manner.
- A consistent approach is taken with each contact.
- In each case the team member obtains information from the caller, and provides a clear explanation of what falls under RQIA's remit (and what does not) and how we can use the information provided to inform our regulatory response.
- Information received is recorded on the RQIA's information system, and will be considered in planning Inspections.
- We may also direct callers to the organisation or individual who is best placed to address their concern or enquiry.
- Where RQIA receives information about a serious matter, consideration will be given to conducting an immediate inspection. When required, this may result in enforcement action.

Safeguarding and Human Rights

Home Truths identified the need to ensure staff working across the care home sector are fully appraised of and adopt an approach that embraces the principles of Human Rights.

RQIA commissioned bespoke Human Rights training for RQIA staff. The programme was delivered by Dr Nazia Latif, a Human Rights and Equality expert, to all RQIA inspection staff in 2018-19. In addition, during 2018-19, in partnership with IHCP, RQIA facilitated a series of workshops where this training was delivered to all Care Home providers across Northern Ireland with very good attendance. RQIA has since refreshed our Human Rights Training for all staff, working with the University of Bristol Human Rights Implementation Centre in January 2022, and made Human Rights mandatory training for all our staff.

In Practice: Embedding Human Rights

- Since the first delivery of the Human Rights training for RQIA staff, a further suite of bespoke human rights training for all RQIA staff - professional, managerial and support staff - was facilitated by the University of Bristol Law School's Human Rights Implementation Centre.
- This refresher training focuses on relevant human rights standards for all staff, as well as more detailed standards, tools and methodologies tailored to the work of inspectors. It is designed to recognise the dual functions of the RQIA as both a regulator and independent monitor, as well as its additional role as a member of the UK National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture (OPCAT).
- This mandatory training commenced in late January 2022 and concluded in March 2022. This training has been adopted into our mandatory training requirements for all RQIA staff and we are planning to develop the use of the materials and tools into our Induction Programme.

In Practice: Taking Actions to Uphold Human Rights

RQIA places a clear focus on upholding the human rights of people living in care homes. Where RQIA identifies or is made aware of potential breaches of human rights these are followed up in line with RQIA's legislative powers.

Case studies follow.

RQIA Action – Case 1

- In late 2020, an unannounced inspection was carried out to a small residential care home in response to information received from HSC Trust staff. The care home was registered to provide care for a small number of older adults and adults with learning disability
- Significant concerns were identified in the overall day-to-day leadership, management and governance of this home. There was a lack of systems in place to keep the residents safe including issues with induction, training and competency assessments for staff and supervision of their practice. Staff were not appropriately recruited or registered with a professional body. Significant failings were noted in relation to infection control and environmental cleanliness. Care records were inaccurate and inconsistently reviewed.
- In one instance Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) records were missing and staff did not demonstrate their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act. Medicines were not safely managed or administered. RQIA was particularly concerned that residents could not easily access the communal facilities of the home, with a lack of social interaction / activities and some care practices clearly impacting on the residents' dignity.
- There were clear concerns in relation to human rights, particularly Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) - the Right to respect for private and family life.
- RQIA issued three failure to comply notices to the Care Home provider. Given the lack of progress toward compliance, and additional concerns which emerged, RQIA made a decision to cancel its registration.

RQIA Action – Case 2

- Following whistleblowing information, an inspection was carried out to a residential care home for older people with physical and learning disability.
- RQIA identified that a resident was subject to significant and frequent physical restraint.
- Upon review of the care documentation it transpired that this had not been approved by a panel under the Mental Capacity Act and appropriate safeguards were not in place in potential contravention of the person's rights under Article 3 of the ECHR (Prohibition of torture: No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment) and Article 5 (Right to liberty and security).
- As a result of RQIA intervention, the safeguards were put in place and subsequently the person was re-accommodated in a more suitable care home.

RQIA Action – Case 3

- In 2022, an unannounced inspection was carried out to a nursing home in response to whistleblowing and an adult safeguarding investigation. The home was registered to provide care for a number of adults aged over 65 years old, with physical health conditions and/or those who are terminally ill.
- Significant concerns were identified in the overall day-to-day staffing, leadership, management and governance of this home. There was a lack of systems in place to ensure the promotion and proper provision for the nursing, health and welfare of patients.
- The home was not sufficiently staffed to ensure that patient's wishes, feelings, beliefs, values, choices were being sought and upheld. There was limited evidence that patient's personal care needs were being met consistently or that the patients were being provided with choice and person centred care.
- RQIA was concerned as there was limited evidence that the care being provided in the home supported patient's emotional, social, psychological, spiritual or cultural needs. There was a notable lack of therapeutic interactions and meaningful activities in the home, and patients were at high risk of social isolation and withdrawal, with the vast majority remaining in their bedrooms all day.
- There were clear concerns in relation to human rights, particularly Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) - (Prohibition of torture: No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment) and article 5 (Right to liberty and security).
- RQIA issued two failure to comply notices to the Care Home provider. Compliance was achieved following significant improvement to patients' quality of life, positive feedback from patients and their relatives, noted improvements to staffing levels, and robust management arrangements.

Complaints Management

The Home Truths Report identified the need for clarity on organisational responsibilities across health and social care for the management of complaints relating to Care Homes. The DoH has a key role in developing HSC complaints procedures guidance, through its Serious Adverse Incidents and HSC Complaints Policy Branch.

RQIA recognises the value of complaints in providing an insight into the day-to-day quality of service delivery. The recent publication of the CPEA Report, commissioned by the DoH, about complaints management, and the subsequent draft proposals launched by the NI Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO), aim to make it easier for service users and families to have their complaint investigated and responded to. RQIA is supportive of this approach and will liaise with the NIPSO to develop the underpinning arrangements to ensure a streamlined approach.

[In Practice: Valuing and Responding to Complaints](#)

The Guidance Team

- Over the past two years and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the RQIA Duty Desk has evolved from a 'Service Support Team' to the current '**Guidance Team**', with dedicated staff, which responds on a daily basis to queries from the service providers and concerns raised by families and staff.
- The Guidance Team provides a direct point of contact by telephone Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm.
- We believe this is a significant improvement in providing an easily accessible point of contact for families and for staff to raise concerns.
- Should a query or issue be raised with our Guidance Team that is best resolved via another route, for example by an individual Care Home or with the local Trust, our Guidance Team can assist the individual and guide them towards the most appropriate route or resource. Where there is clearly an issue that RQIA has a role in addressing, we will take that forward and ensure the individual is informed of the steps being taken.

Partnership Working

- RQIA has strengthened its relationship with COPNI, with regular meetings at executive and operational levels to allow the timely exchange of information to ensure concerns raised with either organisation by families or other statutory bodies are addressed in a timely manner. We also use these developed relationships to ensure both organisations have a means to be sighted on challenges across the sector or emerging issues.

- In November 2020, the Patient and Client Council, in partnership with RQIA, the HSC Board and Public Health Agency, established an Engagement Platform to strengthen engagement and build relationships with relatives of people living in care homes.
- Through this Engagement Platform, on a regular basis, relatives and their representative organisations have had an opportunity to discuss concerns in relation to care, visiting and care partner arrangements.
- These video meetings are also attended by representatives from COPNI, Age NI, the Alzheimer's Society, and CHASNI. RQIA very much welcomes this opportunity for direct contact with relatives and with groups and organisations who are close to the issues so that we can work together to address issues that are important to people.

RQIA Action – Case 1

- During 2021, the RQIA Care Home's Team was contacted by an anxious resident concerned about fire safety arrangements within their care home. Over a period of six months, RQIA inspectors engaged with the resident in an effort to ensure the best outcome for the individual.
- RQIA's inspection team listened to and noted the resident's concerns in a sensitive and compassionate manner throughout this period. In the interests of openness and honesty, RQIA inspectors assisted the resident by liaising, when appropriate, with resident's Trust key worker, the care home, COPNI, and our Estates Team.
- This process resulted in RQIA Care and Estates staff meeting virtually with the resident and their COPNI advocate to provide assurances; work collaboratively with regard to reviewing the resident's lived experience; and reflect on any identified learning which could inform RQIA's practices going forward. During this meeting the resident advised that they had felt listened to and appreciated the time RQIA had given to meeting with them.

RQIA Action – Case 2

- During the pandemic RQIA's developing use of Lay Assessors was paused to help minimise the footfall in care homes. RQIA has reflected on the experience of those who have contributed to the role of Lay Assessor, who supported RQIA inspectors prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been taken into account in the development of a new Handbook and to identify training needs to support Lay Assessors, which will be piloted during 2022-23.
- We have also established a strong links with the Scottish Care Inspectorate's Involvement and Equality Team who manage their team of Inspection Volunteers. The Care inspectorate has also agreed to provide peer support in the development of our Lay Assessor processes.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

The Home Truths Report recommended the DoH or RQIA should produce comprehensive guidance on the potential use of covert and overt CCTV in care homes, compliant with human rights and data protection law. RQIA acknowledges the impact CCTV footage can have in exposing examples of poor practice in care settings, enabling disciplinary actions and prosecution of abuse.

In Practice: CCTV

- In 2016 RQIA produced Guidance on the Use of Overt Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV) for the Purpose of Surveillance in Regulated Establishments and Agencies.
- In direct response to COPNI's Home Truths recommendations, RQIA commissioned Queen's University of Belfast (QUB) School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work to conduct a scoping exercise on research into the effectiveness of covert CCTV in driving improvements in care settings.
- Based on the rapid evidence assessment, QUB found insufficient research evidence to support the proposal to use CCTV in all care home settings. They noted that there are a range of complex debates involved to be considered and addressed but the available research evidence at that time did not support its mainstream use at present. The report also highlights that the relevant legal issues (especially regarding covert surveillance) are also complex. If CCTV is proposed, as the current policies and guidance highlight, consultation, consent and best interests are central considerations. The practical and operational issues are also important. A copy of the report commissioned by RQIA from QUB **has been shared with COPNI for their consideration** and is available on [our website](#).
- It is important to note that the introduction of CCTV in any health and social care setting – **particularly in care homes, which must be considered as people's own homes** - would require a policy direction from the DoH and RQIA has shared the work referred to in this relation to the area of CCTV with the Department.
- The DoH is considering the use of CCTV as part of the development of the Adult Safeguarding Bill for NI.
- The Muckamore Hospital Public Inquiry has included use of CCTV as part of its terms of reference.

Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs)

The Home Truths Report reiterated recommendation 4 of the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-related Deaths that, “Trusts should ensure that all healthcare professionals understand what is required and expected of them in relation to reporting of Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs)” (R10).

In Practice: Review of SAI Process

- RQIA has recently completed a Review of the effectiveness of the current SAI process across the HSC, which highlights that there are significant challenges both with the current SAI process and how it is approached and implemented.
- The Expert Review Team found that the SAI review process and its implementation are not sufficiently robust to consistently enable an understanding of the factors that led to a service user coming to harm. This lack of consistency inevitably means that there are missed opportunities to make the necessary system improvements to avoid similar incidents of harm occurring in the future. We also found that patients and families are not always adequately involved and supported through the process; and can find the number of professionals (medics, nurses, social workers) intimidating and a barrier to effective engagement.
- The RQIA Review Report was published by the DoH (on their website) on 7 July 2022 and endorses the essential need for reform of the SAI process, and its implementation approach.
- The Review Report concludes that the current practice for reviewing and learning from SAIs in Northern Ireland requires modernisation and reform. Improving the SAI process will require the health and social care sector to work closely together and in partnership with patients, their families and carers to co-produce a renewed regional procedure. This will help to support its implementation and to ensure meaningful learning from SAIs contributing to the whole Quality and Safety Strategy across the HSC.

In Practice: SAIs informing Inspection Activity

- In our inspection activity, RQIA considers the findings from SAI reports shared with us and follows these up using our regulatory powers.
- In response to the findings of a safeguarding investigation, which highlighted potential concerns with night-time staffing, RQIA conducted an out of hours inspection at a nursing home providing care to people living with dementia. Our inspection identified concerns with the adequacy of the night-time staffing and its impact on safe and effective care. This led to the issue of a failure to comply notice. During a follow up inspection RQIA was satisfied that appropriate action had been taken by the management of the home to address these concerns.

Registration

Registration is a very important part of the process of regulation and ensuring a sound and safe basis for the delivery of services by competent Providers. Robust assessment of Providers capability to provide safe and effective care was identified in Home Truths.

Prior to the registration with RQIA of a Responsible Individual for the service, a comprehensive fit person interview is conducted to assess their knowledge and understanding of their legislative responsibilities and relevant experience. A new service cannot be registered until the completion of the registration of both the Responsible Individual and the Registered Manager.

In Practice: Improving Registration Processes

- RQIA has placed a focus on improving its processes for the management of registration applications and variations, through the establishment of a Registration Improvement Project.
- Registration processes have been subject to a recent internal audit and the reform work is recognised in its recommendations. This includes the development of operating procedures to standardise and streamline registration processes. Performance Management is at the heart of sustaining positive improvement and this is monitored through the Registration Project Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, and reported to Authority.
- RQIA acknowledges COPNI's view that arrangements around assessments of fit and proper persons require updating. RQIA would welcome strengthening of the legislation around registration as part of the DoH's wider Review of The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and its associated Regulations. A timeline for this Review of Regulation has not yet been produced, but there is an acceptance by Departmental officials that, given the transformation of health and social care services over the last two decades, there is a pressing need for the Regulations to be reviewed and updated.
- RQIA remains determined to ensure that those registered to operate and/or manage care homes have sufficient competence and skill. For example, we have recently refused to register a manager for a nursing home. This was based on previous enforcement history when they managed other homes, and also the high level of whistleblowing in the home for which they were seeking registration.

In Practice: Enforcement Action

- In September 2021 RQIA commenced enforcement action to refuse the registration of an applicant Responsible Individual in respect of a nursing home. This was due to issues with the model of funding for this home which breached the Regulations, and led to the cancellation of the registration of the current operators in order to protect the residents.
- During the period of enforcement RQIA liaised closely with colleagues in the DoH, the local HSC Trust, HSC Board, and Public Health Agency to ensure that appropriate alternative accommodation was identified for each resident in a sensitive and timely manner, with the involvement of families and residents, where appropriate.
- Throughout this time RQIA also engaged with COPNI and local political representatives, including the Minister of Health, to ensure they were fully informed of this action.

Care Home ‘Ratings’

The Home Truths Report recommended the introduction of a ratings system for care settings (R15).

The introduction of ratings for care services in Northern Ireland would require a policy direction from the Department of Health.

In Practice: Exploring Ratings and Reporting

- RQIA is engaging with and developing networks with peer regulators from across the UK and Ireland on their practices relating to effective service regulation, and their experiences and views on the value of ratings in health and social care settings.
- The use of services ratings may be a matter the DoH would consider when existing Regulations are being updated.
- Over the past year or more RQIA, in partnership with a range of stakeholders, has updated its Inspection Report template to ensure both providers and families and service users are clear on RQIA’s assessment of the quality of care provided by the service. We will continue to take account of learning in this regard and seek ways to ensure findings of inspections, and actions taken by both the provider and by RQIA, are clear and made known to service users and their families.

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)

Home Truths recognises the absolute need for service user, family and carer involvement. Since the publication of Home Truths in 2018, RQIA has worked to improve how it involves service users and the public in its work. We fully accept the need for proper and meaningful involvement. The experience of service users, families, carers and staff and others is a vital part of gathering the intelligence necessary to ensure proactive and effective regulation.

In Practice: Involvement

- In 2020 we appointed a Service Improvement Officer, who leads much of this work across the organisation.
- We have also improved our regular engagement with a range of stakeholders. These include: COPNI; PCC; Public Health Agency; HSC trusts; HSC Board; Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC); Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC); Alzheimer's Society; Age NI; and with families and representative groups, including CHASNI.
- We are also planning to re-establish the use of lay assessors in all types of inspection. This will be particularly helpful in listening to the lived experience of residents, their families and service users across the sectors and ensuring this experience is reflected in our inspection reports.
- We are committed to continuing to grow the opportunities for this both through making contact with services users and families during inspections and in more broad discussion about how regulation functions, engaging with the public and those working in the sectors.
- RQIA also welcomes COPNI's acknowledgements of RQIA's active participation in sector-wide service user and family/carer platforms.
- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, RQIA has attended and co-hosted a series of ECHO sessions to provide support to care home providers. These have been focused on areas of concern for the homes including COVID guidance, Infection Prevention Control, the correct use of PPE, and testing.
- RQIA is an active participant in 'My Home Life', a UK-wide initiative to promote quality of life for those living, dying, visiting and working in care homes. In Northern Ireland, the University of Ulster and Age NI lead this project, which aims to support care home managers and senior staff through a quality improvement programme of development and learning which is both relationship-centred and evidenced-based and unique to each home to benefit those who work and live there.

- A number of senior RQIA inspection staff are participating in workshops focusing on the role of the regulator and to build relationships between independent care home providers and RQIA. Improving these relationships may enable care home managers to approach their inspector for advice and support in raising concerns, and ultimately improve outcomes for those living in these homes.
- We are consulting widely on our draft Strategic Plan 2022-27 and Actions for Delivery with stakeholders. Several specific online facilitated events are designed to engage with those stakeholders who have direct knowledge and experience of care homes, and for groups of people for whom care homes are part of their lived experience.

Appendix 1: Specific Recommendations in Home Truths that apply directly to RQIA

Rec No.	The Recommendation	The Action Taken
SAFEGUARDING AND HUMAN RIGHTS		
6	The Registration and Inspection processes of the RQIA must ensure that care providers comply with Human Rights obligations.	<p>We have established a Registration Improvement workstream to ensure that we review each step in the Registration process to ensure that all new providers, and those providers notifying us of any changes, are subject to close scrutiny.</p> <p>We have made Human Rights training for all RQIA staff mandatory and we have provided further updated and focused training in Human Rights for all our Inspectors in early 2022.</p>
7	The Department of Health or RQIA should provide comprehensive guidance on potential use of CCTV in Care Homes	<p>RQIA commissioned Queen's University to review the international evidence on the effectiveness of CCTV in Care Homes and we published that Review in January 2020.</p> <p>RQIA has also published Guidance on the use of CCTV in 'Regulated Establishments and Agencies'.</p> <p>The Department of Health is considering the use of CCTV as they take forward the development of the Adult Safeguarding Bill for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>We note that the current Muckamore Abbey Hospital Public Inquiry is considering the use of CCTV in its Terms of Reference.</p>
CARE AND TREATMENT		
13	RQIA should proactively seek the involvement of relatives and family members and explore other ways to include 'lived experience' in a care setting	<p>As part of each of our Care Home Inspections, we ask the provider to contact some family members if they would like to speak to our Inspectors and/or approach family if they happen to be visiting.</p> <p>Each of our Care Home Inspection Reports (all are published on our website) sets out what residents told us and the contact we have made with families or relatives.</p>
MEDICINES MANAGEMENT		
21	The RQIA Pharmacy Inspectors should review all medication errors and notifications made by the Care Home to RQIA (about medication incidents) to ensure steps taken to improve practice	Our Inspectors review all notifications made to us by the Care Home and include any related to medications which are reviewed by our Pharmacy Inspectors – this information then forms part of our Inspection Plan for that Care Home.
ENVIRONMENT AND CLEANLINESS		
32	Lay assessors / inspectors in care setting for older people should be introduced	Lay assessors had been involved previously in hospitals wards (for older people) and we are introducing Lay Assessors into other care settings. This will particularly focus on the lay Assessor talking to the resident about their experience and talking with families and others.

Rec No.	The Recommendation	The Action Taken
STAFF, SKILLS, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT		
43	RQIA Inspections must review levels of permanent staff and use of agency staff across rotas/shifts	During our inspection we look at safe staffing levels. We are concerned about sufficient numbers of staff and skills to meet the needs of the residents. We do not regulate the balance between permanent and agency numbers, as staffing models can vary in different settings. We note that the recent DoH Consultation on the Reform of Adult Social care in Northern Ireland (closed July 2022) is seeking views on a model for safe staffing levels in care settings.
MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP		
45	RQIA should require managers leaving employment in a Care Home to provide an exit statement	The employer of the Care Home Manager is responsible for recruitment and employment issues in the Home and at this time RQIA do not have regulatory powers to look at these issues of employment.
46	Any inappropriate behaviours by a senior manager in the care sector should be investigated by RQIA for 'registered individuals	Any inappropriate behaviours brought to our attention for a registered individual or a registered manager will be examined and if required we will take regulatory actions.
COMPLAINTS AND COMMUNICATION		
51	RQIA should be able to access all complaints made to a Home	While this falls outside of RQIA's direct remit, we are supportive of the recent NI Public Services Ombudsman draft approach to managing all complaints about public services