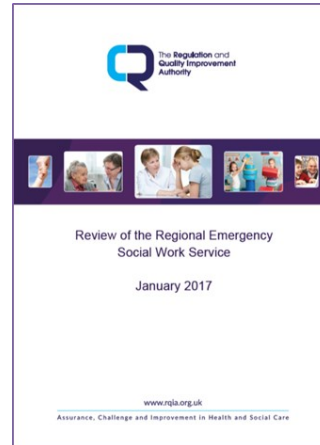


## Find Out More

You can read the full report of our findings and recommendations for improvement on our website, or by clicking on the image of the report.



## Review of the Regional Emergency Social Work Service, January 2017



Our reviews are undertaken as part of RQIA's Three Year Review Programme 2015-2018. Read more about the areas we are reviewing by visiting our website or by clicking on this image.



Mainstream community social work services operate during the traditional office hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. However, access to services may be required 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It is not feasible to provide a full range of social work services during the out-of-hours period. However, since 2013, emergency social work interventions have been provided by the Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS). This regional service is managed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, providing the service to the other trusts during the out-of-hours period.

RQIA's reviewers found that the emergency social work team was delivering a good service; however, we identified a number of significant challenges that must be addressed.

**This review makes seven recommendations to improve the arrangements with the Regional Emergency Social Work Service.**

## Contact us

- ✉ RQIA,  
9th Floor Riverside Tower  
5 Lanyon Place,  
Belfast, BT1 3BT
- ☎ (028) 9051 7500
- 💻 [info@rqia.org.uk](mailto:info@rqia.org.uk)
- 🌐 [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)

Follow us on Twitter: [@RQIANews](https://twitter.com/RQIANews)



## Background

As part of its 2015-18 review programme, RQIA conducted an independent review of Emergency Social Work Provision in Northern Ireland. The review team, which included expert representation from Care Inspectorate Scotland, also sought the views of key stakeholders in relation to the provision of this service.

RQIA's review team met with a range of stakeholders who interact directly with the RESWS, to obtain their views about the service. These included:

- mainstream daytime social work services
- other hospital services
- GP out-of-hours services
- the Police Service of Northern Ireland
- the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

We met with the staff and senior managers from the service to discuss the current arrangements, and how these could be enhanced.

A report of our findings and the review team's recommendations are published on RQIA's website, [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk).

## Recommendations

The RESWS was considered to be delivering a good service. However, it faces some significant challenges that must be addressed. Action must be taken in the following areas:

- Appropriate access to the various IT systems.
- A continuation of the programme of training for approved social workers, and vulnerable adults training.
- A review of the arrangements in relation to staff safety.

Areas requiring further improvements included:

- call management arrangements
- arrangements for referrals in relation to homelessness
- mechanisms for exchanging information between the RESWS and daytime services, the GP out-of-hours service, the Housing Executive and the police
- engagement with individuals who have used the service, to obtain their views about the service
- relationships with GP out-of-hours service, the Housing Executive and the police
- monitoring the performance of the service