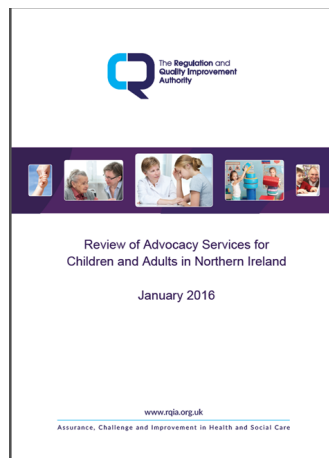


Find Out More

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



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.



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Advocacy Services



Review of Advocacy Services for Children and Adults in Northern Ireland

As part of RQIA's Three Year Review Programme 2015-18, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) asked RQIA to undertake a review of the commissioning arrangements for the provision of Advocacy Services for Children and Adults in Northern Ireland.

The review examined the commissioning systems and processes to consider if they were in keeping with the principles and standards set out in Developing Advocacy Services, DHSSPS policy guide, 2012.

During the review, RQIA also sought the views and experiences of providers of advocacy services.

The review makes 8 recommendations, including a need for commissioners to review their arrangements to ensure that there is a clear point of contact for service providers to provide advice and clarification in relation to service agreements.



Methodology

- We met with commissioners for the provision of advocacy services for children and adults, to obtain their views and experiences of current commissioning arrangements for advocacy services in Northern Ireland.
- We also met with independent advocacy providers to get their views and experiences in relation to the current commissioning arrangement's undertaken by commissioners.
- We considered information provided by commissioners which included the health and social care Board (HSC Board) and HSC trusts through completion of self-assessment questionnaires.
- We met with staff and managers from the HSC Board, HSC trusts, and independent advocacy providers.
- We held a regional summit event which involved all relevant stakeholders to further underpin the final report.
- Finally, we presented the findings from the review and the recommendations in a public report, which is now available on our website www.rqia.org.uk

Findings and Recommendations

RQIA was provided with examples demonstrating recognition by HSC organisations of the importance of independent advocacy services. However, the review team identified a number of constraints that impact on their delivery. These included: no clear statutory duty or strategic framework to provide independent advocacy services in Northern Ireland; resource issues; and an absence of regulation of advocacy providers.

RQIA found that the provision of advocacy services varies across geographical areas and HSC trust programmes of care. Most advocacy services are provided for mental health, learning disability, and family and children's services. In most HSC trusts, there is limited investment in advocacy for individuals in other programmes of care. RQIA's review team also noted that the future direction of advocacy services will be impacted by forthcoming mental capacity legislation.

RQIA makes eight recommendations for improvements which focused on: an assessment to determine future capacity requirements, and to improve access to advocacy; cross-agency working; evaluation of services and to inform future commissioning; consideration of a regulatory framework.