



The **Regulation** and  
**Quality Improvement**  
Authority



# Corporate Strategy | 2017-21

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

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## Foreword Chair / Chief Executive

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) has developed a draft Corporate Strategy for the period 2017-2021 which sets out the strategic direction for the next four years. The draft strategy takes account of the vision set out by the Minister of Health in *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*, Department of Health (DoH) priorities and the Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016–21 within the context of financial constraints and the anticipated reform and restructuring of health and social care services.

The strategy represents RQIA's response to a number of external challenges arising from health and social care reform including international trends in regulation and assurance. Specifically, the strategy recognises the growing requirement for health and social care regulators to demonstrate their contribution to the quality improvement of services, and the independent assurance of the maintenance of service delivery standards.

RQIA operates across a wide and disparate range of health and social care services. RQIA is committed to a programme of continuous improvement of its operations using the EFQM Excellence Model. We recognise the need to respond positively to emerging changes in health and social care in Northern Ireland and to adopt best practice.

We recognise the importance of developing closer and more effective working relationships with a range of service providers and other regulators. Our objective is to assess and encourage improvement in the quality of services, keep the public well informed and safeguard the rights of service users.

The strategy acknowledges and supports the need to actively involve service users, carers and the public in the development and delivery of the various approaches to our work available to RQIA.

The Corporate Strategy 2017-21 will be kept under review to ensure that it takes account of changes in the external environment, best practice and the needs of our stakeholders and service users. Any change to the Corporate Strategy will be carefully assessed and agreed with RQIA's Board and discussed in detail with the Department of Health, prior to implementation.



*Alan Lennon*

**Dr Alan Lennon OBE**  
Chairman



*Olive Macleod*

**Olive Macleod**  
Chief Executive

## Who We Are

RQIA is an arms length non-departmental public body (NDPB) reporting to the DoH. We are funded by the department, but operationally independent of it. We were established by statute and have statutory duties, powers and responsibilities.

### Our Purpose

We work to bring about measurable improvements in the safety and quality of health and social care services for the people of Northern Ireland which is aligned to our quality policy.

We keep the DoH informed about the provision of health and social care services and in particular, their availability and their quality.

We execute our responsibilities in respect of a range of health and social care services such as acute hospitals, children's services and mental health services.

We have statutory powers and responsibilities to carry out inspections, investigations and reviews. Whilst the objective is to encourage the improvement of health and social care services, RQIA has statutory powers to address any failure to comply with DoH regulations and minimum standards.

To ensure that people remain at the heart of our activities RQIA is committed to a human rights based approach to our work which includes the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### Our Internal and External Interested Parties

Internal Interested Parties
Our People (Staff)
Board Members
Audit Committee
Peer Reviewers
Lay Assessors

External Interested Parties	
Public and People using services, carers, relatives, advocacy groups and charities	Service Providers
The Government and Ministers (Political Representatives)	Arms Length Bodies
Department of Health	Private & Voluntary Sector
Health Committee	Commissioners
HSC Board and PHA	Professional Regulatory
5 HSC Trusts & NI Ambulance Service	The Media / Trade Unions
BSO (Shared Services)	

## Who We Are

### Our Risks and Opportunities which could Impact on our Strategic Direction

Risks	
Our People (Staff)	Review of Legislation
Support Systems	Review of Fee's & Frequency
Resources	Mental Health Capacity Act
Workforce Review	Political Will

Opportunities	
Building Relationships with Department of Health	Engagement with the Public and People using services, carers, relatives, advocacy groups and charities
Regional Collaboration /	Health & Wellbeing Survey
Quality Improvement Initiatives	Use of Technology
Use of Information / Intelligence	Media

### How we ensure our Effectiveness

Internal Effectiveness
Robust Recruitment Process
Competencies Matrix
Risk Registers / Annual PESTLE Analysis
Supervision / Mid Year & Annual Appraisal / Personal Development Plan
Management Review Matrix (meetings)

External Effectiveness
Department of Health Bi-Monthly Meeting
Twice Yearly Department of Health Permanent Secretary Meeting
Department of Health Annual Meeting
Service User / Client / Customer Feedback
Complaints Department

## How do we assure quality standards and encourage improvement?

### Inspections

We inspect a range of health and social care services with the primary purpose of ensuring that those bodies comply with relevant regulations, and meet the standards of service quality, as set out by the DoH.

Where a service provider fails to meet the required standards, we take action to ensure compliance. Increasingly, we use inspections to encourage systematic quality improvement by service providers. Our inspections focus on identifying the extent to which care is safe, effective, compassionate and well-led. We reference these findings to the DoH regulations and standards. We use this information and intelligence to help us drive improvement across the range of services we inspect.

We report our findings in a range of formats to keep the public well informed and encourage service providers to engage in systematic quality improvement. Depending on the nature of the service being inspected, inspections may be carried out by an RQIA inspector, or a larger team, including specialist inspectors / peer reviewers and are led by core RQIA staff. In an increasing number of cases inspections are enhanced by the use of lay assessors.

### Reviews

A review is an in-depth investigation into aspects of health and social care services and may include services in hospitals, the community or primary care. It takes into consideration relevant standards and guidelines, the views of the public, health and social care experts and current best evidence.

RQIA has a review programme that includes planned reviews which have been requested by the Department of Health and reviews which are initiated by RQIA in consultation with stakeholders.

During our reviews we examine the service provided, highlight areas of good practice and produce a review report which makes recommendations for improvements to the service provider, where appropriate. 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 in response to specific issues of concern or failures in service provision.

RQIA also facilitates the development and integration of regional guidelines and audit, the aim of which is to improve outcomes for patients, clients and carers.

## Mental Health

RQIA undertakes a range of actions to protect the human rights of vulnerable people with mental ill health, learning, physical, sensory or hidden disabilities. 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.

Mental health and learning disability services are one part of the wider inspection programme and these services may also be subject to targeted review. From November 2016, RQIA's mental health and learning disability team, took responsibility for the inspection of prison health care.



## RQIA's Strategy Map

The RQIA Strategy Map (Figure 1, Page 7) serves as a roadmap to illustrate the activities of the organisation for the period 2017-21.

It brings together the key elements of the strategy: our vision and purpose, the strategic themes which drive improvement, the core activities we need to excel at and the values we uphold to ensure our success.

Each of the elements of the strategy map is explained in more detail below:

- **Vision and Purpose** - answers the question why RQIA exists and what is our role
- **Strategic Themes** - which will govern the way we work and bring about change to the outcomes of the organisation
- **Core Activities** - which RQIA must effectively execute to deliver the strategic themes
- **Values** - a shared set of values which define our culture and capture what we do when we are at our best

The strategy map will be kept under review to ensure that we can respond appropriately to emerging challenges and will be underpinned by our annual business plan.

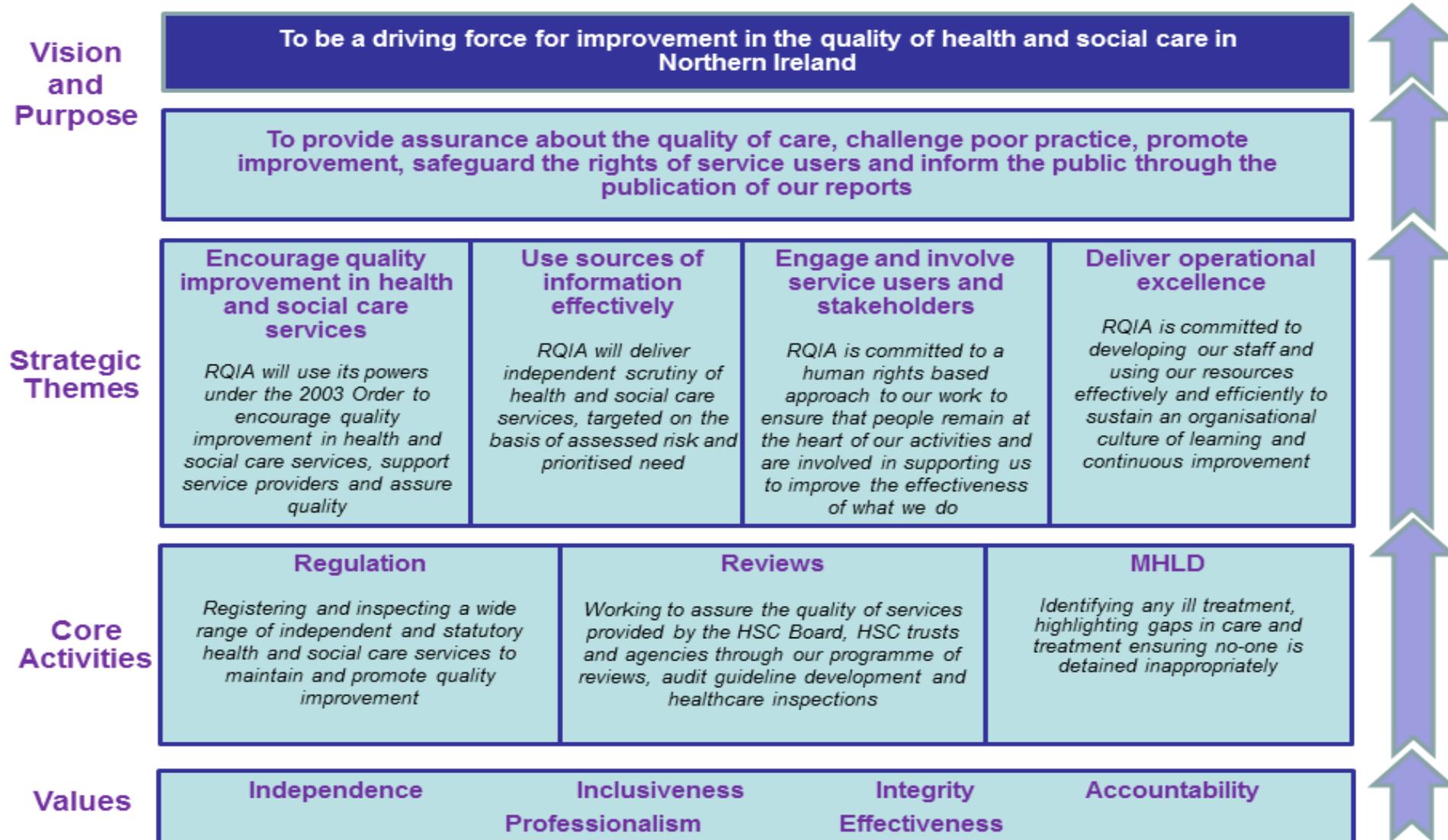
### RQIA Values

RQIA has a shared set of values that define our culture:

- **Independence** - upholding our independence as a regulator
- **Inclusiveness** - promoting public participation and building effective partnerships internally and externally
- **Integrity** - being honest, open, fair and transparent in all our dealings with all of our stakeholders
- **Accountability** - being accountable and taking responsibility for our actions
- **Professionalism** - providing professional, effective and efficient services in all aspects of our work - internally and externally
- **Effectiveness** - being an effective and progressive regulator, forward-facing, outward-looking and constantly seeking to develop and improve our services

## RQIA Strategy Map 2017-21

Figure 1



## Strategic Theme 1

### Encourage quality improvement in health and social care services

RQIA will use its powers under the 2003 Order to encourage quality improvement in health and social care services, support service providers and assure quality.

#### Key Priorities

We will:

1. analyse and report on the availability and quality of health and social care services
2. scrutinise and report on service providers' approach to quality improvement
3. drive forward and share best practice and learning from inspections, audits and reviews
4. provide advice and guidance on quality assurance and improvement

## Strategic Theme 2

### Use sources of information effectively

RQIA will deliver independent scrutiny of health and social care services, targeted on the basis of assessed risk and prioritised need.

#### Key Priorities

We will:

1. strengthen data gathering and analysis within RQIA
2. seek opportunities to collaborate with other regulators and share information with our stakeholders to better target reviews, investigations and inspections, based on need and potential impact
3. improve the quality of information we gather from service users to prioritise the focus of our work

## Strategic Theme 3

### Engage and involve service users and stakeholders

RQIA is committed to a human rights based approach to our work to ensure that people remain at the heart of our activities and are involved in supporting us to improve the effectiveness of what we do.

#### Key Priorities

We will:

1. engage service users and stakeholders in the co-design of our interventions (audit, review, inspection and investigations)
2. involve service users as part of inspections and reviews
3. develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy
4. enable and encourage service users and the public to provide the intelligence needed to inform assurance and improvement activity

## Strategic Theme 4

### Deliver operational excellence

RQIA is committed to developing our staff and using our resources effectively and efficiently to sustain an organisational culture of learning and continuous improvement.

#### Key Priorities

We will:

1. develop a highly skilled and flexible workforce, capable of meeting existing and future challenges
2. promote a culture of good governance, learning and continuous improvement focusing on better outcomes in the work we do
3. benchmark our performance against regional, national and international standards
4. efficiently and effectively manage our resources to demonstrate value for money

## RQIA's Contribution to the NI Draft Programme for Government

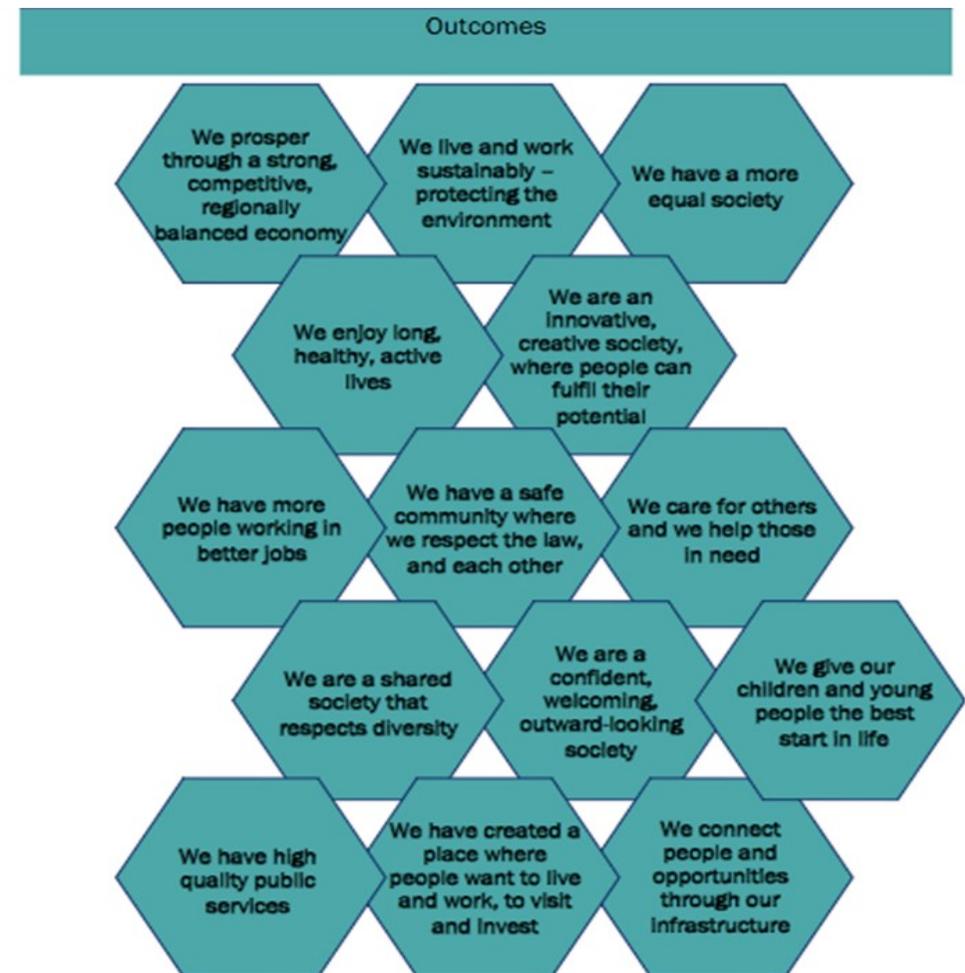
The Draft Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework (Figure 2) sets out the ambition the Northern Ireland Executive has for our society. It is a new approach which focuses on the major societal outcomes that the NI Executive wants to achieve and provides a basis for all sectors to contribute to the development of plans and actions. There are 14 strategic outcomes which, taken together, the Executive believes best describe the society we wish to have.

We identified four PfG strategic outcomes within the Framework that match the role, responsibility and ambition of RQIA. These are:

- We enjoy long, healthy, active lives
- We give our children and young people the best start in life
- We care for others and we help those in need
- We have high quality public services

To support the Northern Ireland Executive in the delivery of the PfG, we have aligned our strategic themes and associated priorities with these four PfG outcomes. RQIA's strategic themes and key priorities have been mapped to the NI PfG Outcomes Framework to show the extent of the alignment and how one contributes to the other (see Page 11).

Figure 2 - Draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework



## Contributing to the NI Draft Programme for Government

RQIA's contribution to the achievement of the NI PfG outcomes through delivery of our strategic themes and priorities is outlined as follows:

Strategic Theme	Key Priorities	NI Draft Programme for Government Outcomes			
		We enjoy long, healthy, active lives	We give our children and young people the best start in life	We care for others and we help those in need	We have high quality public services
Encourage quality improvement in HSC services	Analyse and report on the availability and quality of health and social care services	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Scrutinise and report service providers' approach to quality improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Drive forward and share best practice and learning from inspections, audits and reviews	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Provide advice and guidance on quality assurance and improvement	✓	✓	✓	
Use sources of information effectively	Strengthen data gathering and analysis within RQIA	✓			✓
	Seek opportunities to collaborate with other regulators and share information with our stakeholders to better target reviews, investigations and inspections, based on need and potential impact	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improve the quality of information we gather from service users to prioritise the focus of our work	✓	✓	✓	✓
Engage and involve service users and stakeholders	engage service users and stakeholders in the co-design of our interventions (audit, review, inspection, investigations)	✓			✓
	Involve service users as part of the inspections and reviews	✓	✓		✓
	Develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy				✓
	Enable and encourage service users and the public to provide the intelligence needed to inform assurance and improvement activity	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deliver operational excellence	Develop a highly skilled and flexible workforce, capable of meeting existing and future challenges				✓
	Promote a culture of good governance, learning and continuous improvement, focusing on better outcomes in the work we do	✓			✓
	Benchmark our performance against regional, national and international standards	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Efficiently and effectively manage our resources to demonstrate value for money				✓

## Delivering the Strategy

The successful delivery of the strategy is dependent on:

- continuing to engage and involve service users and stakeholders in the co-design of our work
- developing closer and more effective working relationships with a range of service delivery organisations and other regulators
- maintaining robust performance management and reporting processes
- recruiting and retaining a skilled and dedicated workforce
- the availability of adequate funding

RQIA will ensure that appropriate governance and accountability arrangements are in place to support the robust scrutiny of the effective delivery of the strategy.

Each year, RQIA will develop a business plan with actions and measures fully aligned to the four strategic themes and priorities in the Corporate Strategy.

RQIA's Corporate Strategy 2017-21 will be kept under review to ensure that it takes account of changes in the external environment, best practice and the needs of our stakeholders and service users.

Any change to the Corporate Strategy will be carefully assessed and will be agreed with RQIA's Board and discussed in detail with the DoH, prior to implementation.

## Measuring What Matters

RQIA has developed a suite of financial and process performance measures which are monitored by the RQIA Board on a regular basis. Whilst these measures provide a useful view of organisational performance, RQIA recognises the need to move towards the greater use of outcome measures. We therefore plan to enhance the current suite of performance measures by developing a complementary suite of outcome measures. These outcome measures will focus on the quality of RQIA's reports, recommendations, advice and enforcement and their impact on the actions of service delivery bodies. They will also be informed by service user and stakeholder feedback. Financial, process and outcome measures will be incorporated into annual Business Plans and reported to RQIA's Board on a regular basis.





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