



RQIA Business Plan 2019-20



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Who We Are

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), as Northern Ireland's scrutiny and improvement body for health and social care, has a clear vision for how we support and ensure care is safe, effective, compassionate and well-led. We believe that people in Northern Ireland should experience a better quality of services as a result of our inspections, audits and reviews.

We are committed to working closely with providers of health and social care services so that they can deliver improved care. We also are dedicated to hearing and acting on the experiences of patients, clients, families and carers. It is only by working in partnership with users and providers of care that we can encourage and influence improvement.

What We Do

Under the powers conferred on RQIA by The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 we are the body which registers and inspects what are known as 'regulated services'. These include nursing and residential care homes; children's homes; domiciliary care and nursing agencies; residential family centres; adult day care services; and independent healthcare establishments (such as private dental clinics; hospices; and independent hospitals and clinics).

We use our powers to inspect these services against the range of regulations and standards in place. Where we find issues with the safety or quality of care delivered, we work with providers to improve. Where a provider is unable to meet our requirements for improvement, we have a range of powers of enforcement, including in the most serious cases de-registration.

RQIA is also the independent arbiter of the quality of care delivered in the health and social care service in Northern Ireland. There has been a legal duty of quality placed on health and social care (HSC) trusts since 2003, and RQIA undertakes a range of activity to keep the Department of Health informed as to the quality of care delivered.

We inspect acute hospitals against a range of published standards and also report on the quality of hygiene we find. Through our programme of audits and reviews we provide an independent overview of the quality and availability of services, which in the last year have included a Review of the Governance Arrangements for Child Protection in the HSC in Northern Ireland and Guidelines on Caring for People with a Learning Disability in General Hospital Settings.

Since 2009, RQIA has had a specific responsibility to assess the health and social care services provided to people with mental ill health 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.

RQIA has four core values that underpin how we work. In all that we do we will be FAIR – fair and accountable, and act with integrity and respect. We live these values in how we do behave with service users, providers, carer and the general public, and in how we act with each other.

This business plan has been developed to support our overarching aim that people will have confidence that RQIA will use our expertise to best effect and take action where necessary to improve the quality of health and social care delivered in Northern Ireland.

The Context in Which We Work

RQIA is an arm's length body of the Department of Health. We are operationally independent, but are accountable to the Department. Like all public sector bodies, we are working within ongoing constraints on the resources available to us.

The ongoing absence of the Assembly has impacted on the ability of the health service to introduce new policy and legislation; but work continues on the programme of reform introduced following the Bengoa Report. Given our position as the only regional body charged with reporting on the quality and availability of health

and social care services, RQIA aims to be a central tenet in the Delivering Together programme.

In 2018-19 the Department of Health commissioned RQIA to undertake work following the recall of neurology patients in the Belfast HSC Trust. This will continue in 2019-20 with the review of the casenotes of deceased patients. We have also been commissioned to undertake other reviews to support policy development in areas such as prison healthcare and the statutory duty of quality on HSC bodies.

The Department of Health has begun a review of our founding legislation, and in the first phase will look at what is regulated in Northern Ireland and why. In the coming year we reaffirm our commitment to work with them as a key stakeholder in this important work – particularly to reinforce a rights-based approach to our work.

We continue to review and revise how we do our business in RQIA. In 2019-20, we will focus on our inspection methodology to ensure we are working effectively to promote improvement in the services we inspect across the HSC and independent sectors.

In 2018-19, we invested substantially in Human Rights training for all inspection staff. This training was bespoke to RQIA and the contexts within which we work. In 2019-20, we will ensure that our inspection reports include reference to the human rights issues relevant to people placed in the settings and services we inspect and review, and we will evaluate the impact of this investment in training.

Our Membership Scheme is now established and through this we will examine what co-design and co-production looks like for RQIA.

As part of enhancing our stakeholder engagement we will involve providers in our work, and in the first instance have designed a provider survey in conjunction with the Independent Health and Care Providers to determine their experience of registration and inspection. We will use this information to inform our improvement work going forward, and develop and agree a shared view of quality.

We will undertake a range of activities to support improved outcomes where we can. We have planned work on our systems and processes; our use of intelligence; supporting and empowering our staff through learning and development activity; effective use of enforcement where necessary; building and improving our relationships with all our stakeholders; and undertaking internal improvement as part of our commitment to being a learning organisation.

2019-20 is likely to be another busy and productive year for RQIA. We look forward to the challenges ahead and will meet them with a commitment to recognising and sharing good practice where we find it and encouraging improvement where necessary.

Olive Macleod OBE
RQIA Chief Executive

Strategic Theme One:

Encourage Quality Improvement in Health and Social Care

RQIA has a range of powers and functions to encourage the improvement of the quality of health and social care. We aim to use these powers proportionately and appropriately, to give all providers the opportunity to improve before we move to enforcement action.

We will work collaboratively, offering support and signposting to best practice based on our expertise and experience, whilst maintaining our independence. It is this independence that allows to discharge effectively our oversight and scrutiny functions.

Outcome: RQIA can identify demonstrable improvement in the quality of health and social care as a result of our work.

Actions for 2019-20:

1. We will lead an independent assurance process, overseeing the sustainable implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-Related Deaths.
2. We will produce regular summaries of the quality of services we inspect, audit and review in 2019-20.
3. We will implement the recommendations specific to RQIA from any external reports and reviews. .
4. We will provide systems to support improvement where we identify gaps in the quality of services we inspect.

Strategic Theme Two:

Use Sources of Information Effectively

RQIA generates a wealth of valuable information and in 2018-19 we will continue our drive to turn this information into intelligence. Our ongoing partnership with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) will strengthen our work in this area and build capacity in our own teams to ensure sustainability. We will use this data to better inform ourselves and our stakeholders of our work.

Outcome: RQIA will strengthen its data-gathering and analysis function and optimise the use of internal and external sources of information to inform an intelligence-led approach to designing and focusing its work to inform our own improvement, and to support improvement across the HSC system.

Actions for 2019-20:

1. We will use enhanced intelligence to support our move to a risk-based model of regulation.
2. We will examine how we can improve our use of qualitative and quantitative intelligence to support activity throughout the organisation.
3. We will consider how we gather and disseminate examples of good practice in all the settings where we have a presence, in order that learning can be shared throughout the HSC system.
4. We will review our website to make better use of this resource in sharing information and intelligence in a meaningful way.
5. We will use our iConnect system to develop a framework to assess and monitor the effectiveness of our right-based approach to inspection, review and audit activity.

Strategic Theme Three:

Engage and Involve Service Users and Stakeholders

RQIA has a broad and diverse range of stakeholders and in 2019-20 we will improve how we involve them in the design and delivery of our work.

Outcome: RQIA can demonstrate that our approach to our work ensures that the people who use health and social care services are involved in supporting us to improve the effectiveness of what we do.

Actions for 2019-20:

1. We will increase the profile of RQIA with the public.
2. We will work collaboratively to report on the lived experience of users of health and social care.
3. We will set out in our revised inspection methodology how we will use lay assessors in all inspection activity
4. We will facilitate one RQIA open house event where all stakeholders will be welcome to meet RQIA staff and learn about any aspect of our work.
5. We will introduce a regular e-zine to communicate with our stakeholders.
6. We will evaluate and revise our use of social media to ensure we are communicating in the most effective way for all our stakeholders.

Strategic Theme Four:

Deliver Operational Excellence

As an improving organisation we are dedicated to reflecting on and refining how we do our business. In 2019-20, we will continue to improve how we work to make best use of our people, their skills and the technology available to support our work.

We will continue our programme of organisational development to support our staff, improve the quality of our products and provide better service to all our customers and stakeholders.

Outcome: RQIA's commitment to a sustainable culture of learning and improvement is demonstrated in our approach to developing our staff and using our resources in the most effective way.

Actions for 2019-20:

1. We will evaluate the implementation of the actions set out in our Transformation, Modernisation and Reform framework.
2. We will develop and implement an organisational development plan to give our staff the skills they need to support transformation, modernisation and reform.
3. We will analyse and evaluate the responses to the HSC Staff Survey in order to further revise our plans for internal transformation and reform.
4. The review of our inspection methodology will include revised reporting formats.
5. We will examine and reform our registration processes to ensure they reflect a rights-based approach.

Core Activities

In addition to the specific actions included in our business plan for the coming year, RQIA will maintain our core activities. As specific projects are completed and mainstreamed into 'business as usual', these may become core activities in the following years.

Actions for 2019-20:

1. We will exercise RQIA's powers to support and drive improvement in the services we inspect, review and audit.
2. We will provide advice to the Department of Health on proposed policy and legislation affecting the regulation or quality of health and social care.
3. We will meet our statutory requirements in respect of the regulation, inspection, review and audit of health and social care.
4. We will manage our resources effectively to ensure that we operate within allocated budget, operating within a breakeven tolerance where a deficit is not permissible and a surplus cannot exceed £20k.
5. We will maintain our commitment to the Northern Ireland Executive's approved Asset Management Strategy, including delivery of the Property Asset Management Plan.
6. We will adopt a targeted, proportionate and responsive approach to our programme of inspection, audit and reviews.
7. We will develop and foster strategic alliances with other regulators and improvers.
8. We will recognise and share examples of good practice where we find it.
9. We will continue to actively participate in the work of HSC QI (Quality Improvement).

10. We will implement and oversee central monitoring of all statistical information requests.
11. We will publish an annual summary of high-level statistical information in relation to the regulatory activities carried out by RQIA. The publication will be in line with official statistics guidance, and as such we will seek national statistics accreditation.
12. We will ensure that the work of the Information team is in line with the NISRA and Department of Health standards.
13. We will develop strategic alliances with other organisations to promote the use of information collected and analysed internally within RQIA and work collaboratively where we can.
14. We will improve how we do our business, to ensure that people trust and use our reports of inspection, audits and reviews to make informed choices and decisions about health and social care services.



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