



The **Regulation** and
Quality Improvement
Authority

Guidance Note

Focus Groups for Acute Hospital Inspection Programme

A focus group is a small group of people who participate in an open, but targeted, discussion led by a skilled facilitator. The Acute Hospital Inspection Programme will include a number of focus groups with staff from various backgrounds.

Focus groups for HSC staff

Separate focus groups will be held for different groups of staff, for example, junior doctors, registered nurses, allied health professionals, support staff and senior managers. These will, where possible, be peer-to-peer focus groups.

The trust affiliate will be asked to encourage and coordinate attendance at these groups. Clear guidance will be provided about the characteristics of the group of people who should attend the focus groups.

- Focus groups should comprise 8-12 people.
- Inspectors will use a note taking template to record feedback received.
- A focus group will usually last one hour and will cover several pre-determined key questions.
- The facilitator will keep the discussion on track and will try to clarify and summarise discussion where necessary.

The public nature of focus groups makes them unsuitable for discussing personal or sensitive topics or issues. Should a member of staff wish to discuss issues such as this they should approach the inspector directly, who will facilitate this.

What is the information used for?

The information will be used as part to inform the overall outcome of the inspection and the report produced after the visit. This report will be published on the RQIA website. All information shared will be treated confidentially and names and personal details will not appear in the report.