



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



# ABOUT RQIA

[www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care



# Who we are

We are the independent health and social care regulator in Northern Ireland. We aim to assure public confidence in health and social care through our independent, proportionate and responsible regulation.

Through our inspections, reviews and audits, RQIA provides assurance about the quality of care, challenges poor practice, promotes improvement and safeguards the rights of service users. We inform the public of our findings through the publication of our reports.

We are committed to working closely with service providers 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 service users and providers of care that we can encourage and influence improvement.

## Our Work

### Inspections

Every year we inspect around 1,500 health and social care services. These include almost 500 nursing and residential care homes as well as children's

homes; domiciliary care and nursing agencies; adult day care services; private dental clinics; and independent hospitals and hospices and clinics.



We also inspect the quality of care in acute hospitals, mental health and learning disability wards and in places of detention including prisons.

At RQIA we believe that everyone using health and social care services is entitled to and should expect the highest quality care. As a result of our inspections they should experience a better quality of service.

Mostly we find that care is good. Our inspectors look for evidence that care is safe, effective, compassionate and that the service is well-led. We check that the service is delivering care in line with the standards, best practice and legal requirements that apply.

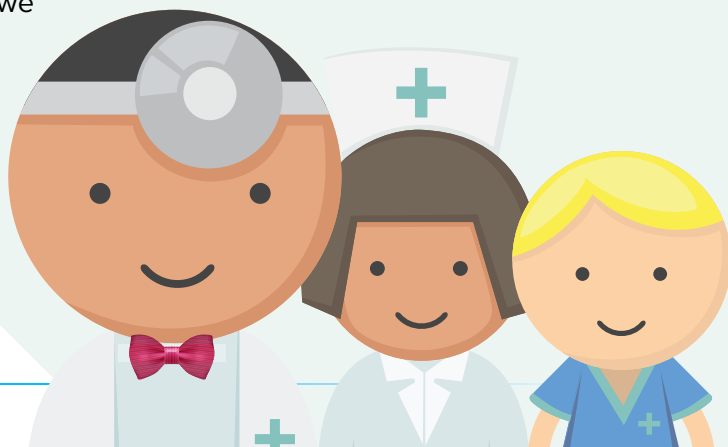
Before our inspection we review all the information we hold about that service. This includes our previous reports as well as records of complaints,

any whistleblowing, or other intelligence that has been shared with us. Some of the most useful information we get comes from those using a service or their families and carers who tell us about the real-life experiences - both positive and challenging.

This information can prompt us to inspect a service to check out any concerns.

The vast majority of our inspections are unannounced and can take place day or night - seven days a week.

You can read the reports of our inspections of adult services on our website at [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk).



## Reviews and Audits

RQIA can conduct reviews or audits to assure the quality of services provided by health and social care organisations in response to current events, or to examine the how they are operating. These can be initiated by RQIA or commissioned by the Department of Health.

When we review a service we take into consideration relevant standards and guidelines, the views of the public, health care experts and current research. During our reviews we examine the service provided, speak to staff and to those using the service. We highlight areas of good practice and make recommendations for improvement to the service provider. We report our findings to the Department of Health for their consideration and share any lessons learned across the wider health and social care sector, publishing reports of our findings online at [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk).

## Mental Health and Learning Disability Duties

RQIA has a specific responsibility to assess the health and social care services provided to people in acute or care settings 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.

## Other Duties

RQIA is responsible for the oversight of health and social care in prisons and secure accommodation for children. Given this role we are designated as a national preventive mechanism by the UK government to ensure the protection of the rights of those in places of detention.

We inspect services providing radiological procedures including x-rays and radiotherapy under ionising radiation (medical exposure) regulations to protect service users from inappropriate or unnecessary exposure to ionising radiation during these treatments.

RQIA is also a prescribed organisation under whistleblowing (public interest disclosure) legislation that provides protection to people wishing to raise concerns about wrongdoings in their own workplace.

We take every disclosure seriously and we work to ensure that any risks to service users are addressed by the relevant organisation.

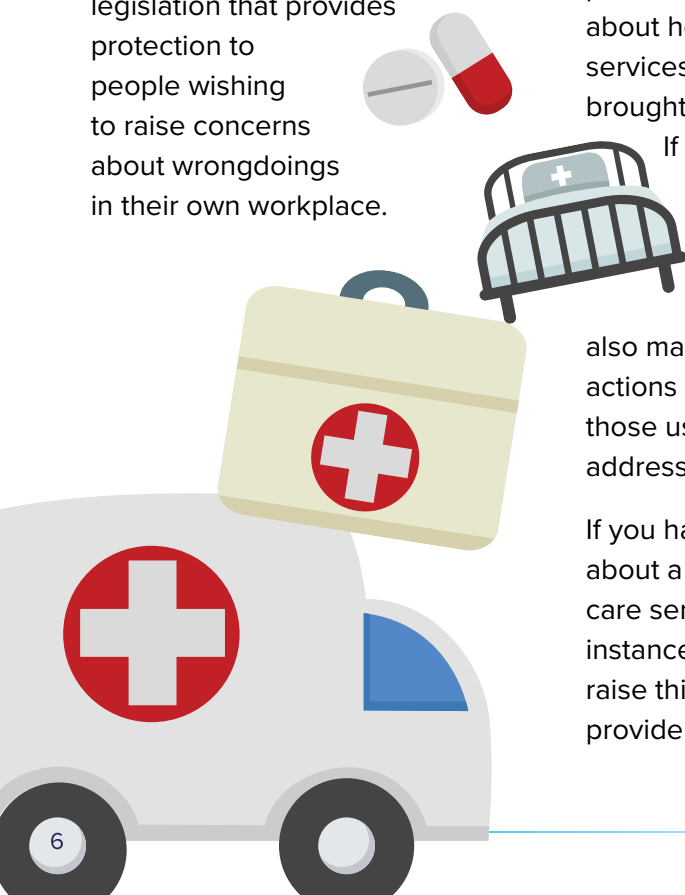
## Complaints about Health and Social Care Services

While RQIA does not have legal powers to investigate complaints about health and social care services, we take every concern brought to our attention seriously.

If you bring a concern to us about a service we will use this information to inform our inspection or review work. We will

also make sure that appropriate actions are taken to safeguard those using the service and to address the concerns identified.

If you have a complaint about a health and social care service, in the first instance you should raise this with the service provider.



You can also receive support and guidance from the Patient and Client Council. The provider should aim to resolve the complaint in line with their complaints policy and procedures.

Where necessary you may wish to involve the commissioner of the service (usually the local health and social care trust).

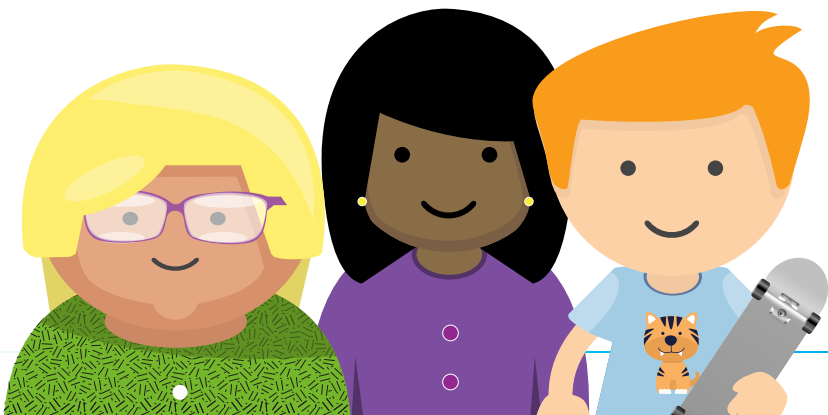
If you are not satisfied with the resolution offered, you can refer your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

If you wish to speak to RQIA to discuss a concern about a health and social care service you can telephone us at (028) 9536 1990 (Monday – Friday 9am-5pm) or email [info@rqia.org.uk](mailto:info@rqia.org.uk).

## Feedback and Complaints about RQIA

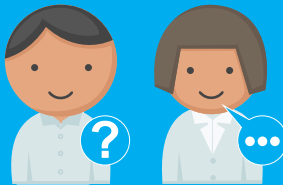
To ensure we continue to improve the quality of the service we provide we welcome your feedback on any aspect of our work.

We are committed to responding to feedback and addressing complaints in a timely and effective manner and learning from them to improve RQIA as an organisation.





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## Contact Us

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