



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

RQIA CORPORATE
INFORMATION

Authority Members & the Executive Management Team

Useful Contacts



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Authority Members



Sarah Wakfer
Chair

Sarah Wakfer was appointed Chair of RQIA in October 2026. Sarah has over 18 years' experience in Local Government in England in key roles including Head of Internal Audit and Head of Policy for Arm's Length Bodies; and was responsible for delivering significant transformation programmes. She has five years' experience of carrying out inspections for the Care Quality Commission in England focusing on service users and families. Formerly a Non-Executive Director of the Prison Service Management Board, Mrs Wakfer is a Board Member of USEL (Ulster Supported Employment Ltd.), and is Chair of its Audit and Risk Committee. Sarah was appointed as a Member of the Authority on 1 February 2023 for a four-year term and has previously served as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and as RQIA's Speak Up Champion.

Dr Mary McIvor is a retired civil servant, having worked at senior levels across a range of Departments over the past 30 years. She has a strong working knowledge of policy, public finances, strategy development, economic issues and the delivery of public services. She has a wealth of experience in governance and accountability matters and is CIPFA qualified. Dr McIvor was Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Commission for Victims and Survivors. She also has a research PhD in cognitive psychology and has a strong interest in behavioural psychology.

She is also a school governor with St Dominic's Girls' Grammar School, Belfast. Dr McIvor was appointed as a Member of the Authority on 1 February 2023 for a four-year term and is Chair of the Mental Health Committee.



Dr Mary McIvor

Cheryl Lamont, CBE DL is a qualified social worker. She joined the Probation Board for Northern Ireland in 1985 and from 2016 until her retirement in June 2021 was Chief Executive, introducing highly regarded initiatives in collaborative working, innovation and modernisation.

Ms Lamont was appointed as a Member of the Authority on 1 February 2023 for a four-year term, and is Chair of RQIA's Business, Appointments and Remuneration Committee until 1 September 2026.



Cheryl Lamont
CBE, DL

Alphy Maginness is a qualified solicitor and prior to his retirement in March 2022 was Chief Legal Adviser in what is now the Business Services Organisation (BSO) for 24 years. As a Senior Executive, Mr Maginness also sat on the Board of BSO and was a member of its Senior Management Team, contributing to its overall strategic direction. Mr Maginness was appointed as a Member of the Authority on 1 February 2023 for a four-year term and is Chair of the Legislative and Policy Committee.



Alphy Maginness

Authority Members



Dr Nazia Latif

Dr Nazia Latif has extensive experience of working on human rights and equality issues in Northern Ireland and internationally. She currently runs Right Practice which specialises in human rights and equality obligations. Dr Latif worked for the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission for 13 years where she led systemic investigations including "In Defence of Dignity", an investigation into the human rights of older people in nursing homes. She is an Independent Assessor for Diversity Mark. Dr Latif is a Commissioner for The Equality Commission NI. Dr Latif was appointed as a Member of the Authority on 1 February 2023 for a four-year term. Dr Latif will take over as Chair of the Business, Appointments and Remuneration Committee on 1 September 2026. Dr Latif is also the Equality and Disability Champion.

Rodney is a proud mental health nurse whose career spans nearly four decades in health and social care, where he has held pivotal roles across clinical practice, service design, commissioning, policy development, and leadership within health and social care. Prior to his recent retirement, he served as Head of Nursing for Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainability at NHS England. Before that, he held the position of Executive Director of Nursing at the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland and also served as Deputy Chief Nursing Officer at the Department of Health, Northern Ireland. Rodney is a passionate advocate for incorporating the lived experience voice into healthcare design.

He is a proponent of a lifespan approach to mental health and population health. He is committed to advancing the 'quintuple aim' improving quality, safety, and outcomes for people, families, and communities. In retirement, Rodney continues to be deeply engaged in healthcare leadership. He recently collaborated with Northern Ireland's Practice Education Council and joined RQIA as Authority Member (Nursing) on 12 June 2025 for a four-year term.



Rodney Morton

Derek is a Digital Transformation Consultant with over 30 years' experience in IT. Beginning his career in telecommunications sector, he later specialised in the delivery of technology-enabled public services. He served as Director for services delivered to NI Direct - initially as a co-founder and senior leader at Asidua, and later with Civica. In this role, he led teams delivering a wide range of digital solutions for departments including Justice, Infrastructure, and Finance, helping to modernise access to services such as driver licensing, civil registration, criminal records checks, and legal aid.

He subsequently held various roles with local technology startup Ampliphae, supporting global organisations in managing the risks of adopting cloud-based applications. Derek was leader of Civica's Innovation Team of the Year in 2017. He also volunteers with the Ulster Aviation Society, helping enhance exhibits through digital technology. He joined RQIA on 5 June 2025 for a four-year term.



Derek Clydesdale

Executive Management Team



Briege Donaghy, Chief Executive, RQIA

Briege joined the RQIA on 1 July 2021 as Chief Executive, having worked in health and social care across Northern Ireland since graduating from Queens University, Belfast (Physics) and later undertaking a Masters Degree at Manchester University in Health Informatics.

Prior to her appointment to RQIA, Briege worked within the western health and social care services, where she spent seven years as Director of Planning, Performance, ICT and Corporate Services. She joined the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in 2007, where she held a number of Director positions, including Director of Strategic Development and Business Services, and led on contracting of services with independent sector providers including Care Homes. Before joining RQIA she worked on the development of Integrated Care Partnerships, working with primary care and other statutory organisations.

Karen Scarlett, Director of Adult Care Services



Karen Scarlett joined RQIA in 2014 and has worked in various roles within the Organisation including Inspector, Senior Inspector and Assistant Director within the Care Homes Team. Karen graduated from Queen's University in 1996 with a degree in history and politics then went on to qualify as a registered nurse in 1999, completing her degree in community nursing in 2001. Prior to starting in RQIA she worked in general surgery, and occupational health in Belfast Trust; and, community nursing, practice development and practice education in Northern Trust.

Karen is now the Director of Adult Care Services and is responsible for teams that register and inspect a range of services including nursing homes; residential care homes; domiciliary care agencies; nursing agencies; adult placement agencies; and, day care settings. She also has responsibility for the estates; finance; and pharmacist teams and the directorate administrative team.



Lynn Long, Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare

Lynn joined RQIA as an inspector in 2009, working in the former Nursing Homes team and in 2010 spent a brief period of time supporting colleagues in the RQIA's Mental Health Directorate to help develop and operationalise their inspection methodology. From 2011 until March 2013 Lynn worked as an inspector in the Independent Health Care team and then as a Senior Inspector in the team until April 2018. Lynn was appointed Assistant Director from December 2018 with responsibility for the Mental Health and Learning Disability Team, Independent Healthcare Team and Hospitals Programme Team.

Promoted to Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare in December 2021, Lynn gained a BSc in Health Studies (First Class Honours) in July 2017 and a Post Graduate Diploma in Health and Social Care Leadership (with Distinction) in 2023 and a Masters in Public Administration in Public Sector Executive Development, in 2024.

Executive Management Team



Jacqui Murphy, Head of Corporate Affairs and Business Services

Jacqui joined RQIA as a Project Manager and now works as a senior leader with more than 30 years' experience working in regional organisations across health and social care, regulation, corporate services, governance, programme management and digital transformation. Graduating in Public Policy and Management, with postgraduate qualifications in Management, Information Technology and several leadership programmes, Jacqui has successfully led major organisational change programmes, health and social care governance reviews, quality improvement initiatives and regional ICT implementations.

Recognised for her ability to deliver complex programmes and build high-performing teams, she has consistently driven improvements in quality, efficiency and public service outcomes across the health and social care sector.

Ruth Finn, Director of HSC Regulation and Quality Improvement



Ruth joined RQIA as Director of Regulation and Quality Improvement in July 2026, bringing extensive experience gained across a thirty-year career in Health and Social Care throughout Northern Ireland. A Registered General Nurse, Ruth has held specialist and senior leadership roles across Health and Social Care including in infection prevention and control and the ambulance, hospital and community sectors. She holds a Diploma, Degree and Master's Degree in Nursing (QUB), a Postgraduate Certificate in Infection Prevention and Control, and a number of leadership, management and quality improvement qualifications. Her career has focused on improving quality, patient safety and services through partnership working, education and continuous quality improvement.

Ruth is a strong advocate for compassionate, values-based leadership and is committed to supporting RQIA's role in driving improvement, assuring quality and building public confidence in Health and Social Care services across Northern Ireland.



Dr Laurence Joseph Mark Cross GMC 4710442 Director of Independent Healthcare and Responsible Officer

Mark Cross (BSc Hons, PhD, MRCP UK) is a medical doctor with a PhD and joined RQIA as Responsible Officer and Director of Independent Healthcare in June 2026. He is the Medical Lead for the Northern Ireland Regional Yellow Card Centre and is a member of the Medication Safety Oversight Board. He is also the Royal College of Physicians Northern Ireland Representative for the RCP Patient Safety Group and also the RCP Medicine Safety Group. Mark Cross' Certificate of Completion of Training is within Acute Medicine and General Internal Medicine.

He has previously worked and involved in Pharmaceutical Medicine, Industry, Charity and also within NHS Health and Social Care Trusts for nearly 3 decades. Laurence is also a person with lived experience of the healthcare system.

Executive Management Team



Karen Harvey, Professional Advisor Social Work/Approved Social Work Lead

Karen is a qualified social worker and has been employed for the last 44 years in the area of older people and mental health; older people within day care; residential; fieldwork; leadership and management settings, mainly within the NHSCT. Since 2022, she has been employed at RQIA as Professional Advisor, Social Work. Karen has many years' experience in collaborative working in a senior role with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and has led on projects including the reform and modernisation of services in Community Care, and, Mental Health Older People programmes, developing a range of services for older people, people with dementia, and older people with functional mental illness on the basis of assessed need.

Karen is experienced in social work education and training and is a qualified Approved Social Worker and Practice teacher.

For more information:

General Enquiries: info@rqia.org.uk / (028) 9536 1111

Guidance Team: If you have a concern or a query about a health and social care service, whether as a member of the public or a service provider, you can contact our Guidance Team: info@rqia.org.uk / (028) 9536 1990

Registration Team: registration@rqia.org.uk / (028) 9536 1111

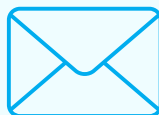
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