



The **Regulation** and
Quality Improvement
Authority



Corporate Strategy | 2015-18

Assurance, Challenge and Improvement in Health and Social Care

Vision

To be a driving force for improvement in the quality of health and social care in Northern Ireland.

Purpose

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent health and social care regulator in Northern Ireland. We provide assurance about the quality of care, challenge poor practice, promote improvement, safeguard the rights of service users and inform the public through the publication of our reports.

Values

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

- **Independence** - upholding our independence as a regulator
- **Inclusiveness** - promoting public involvement and building effective partnerships - internally and externally
- **Integrity** - being honest, open, fair and transparent in all our dealings with 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

These come together in RQIA's Culture Charter, which sets out the behaviours that are expected when employees are living our values in their everyday work.



Foreword	02
The Regulation Environment and Impact of Change	03
Strategic Changes in Service Delivery	03
A Changing Population.....	03
Lessons from Inquiries and Investigations	04
Emerging Developments.....	04
Regulating in Austerity	05
The Challenges Ahead and Our Response.....	05
RQIA's Strategy Map	08
Strategic Themes 2015-18	10
Delivering the Strategy	13



This is RQIA's fourth corporate strategy, which covers the three year period from 2015-2018. It sets out our strategic vision and values, and identifies the outcomes, which we hope to achieve over the course of this strategy. These outcomes will be restated as key performance measures in RQIA's annual business plans over the three year period.

RQIA's core purpose is to provide assurance about the quality of care, challenge poor performance, promote improvement, safeguard the rights of service users and inform the public through the publication of our reports.

We represent the public interest in making sure that health and social care services are safe, effective and compassionate and take appropriate account of peoples' human rights. We have specific powers to conduct inspections, investigations and reviews.

We hold registered providers and health and social care (HSC) bodies to account through use of formal sanctions, applied proportionately when it is necessary to bring about improvements.

Over the course of this strategy RQIA will align its work with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's (DHSSPS) strategic vision for health and social care, as set out in Quality 2020 (DHSSPS, 2011).

RQIA is a learning organisation and we have demonstrated a commitment to excellence. We have achieved Investors in People (IIP) accreditation and the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Steps to Excellence Bronze Level of Recognition.

Our aspiration is to continue to be a high performing organisation, developing our workforce, continuously improving our systems and processes, and being open and transparent with the public.

In times of financial austerity it is essential to maintain a commitment to proportionate and effective regulation. RQIA will make best use of existing resources in fulfilling its obligations as defined in the relevant statutes and regulations.

In this strategy we have focused on three specific and important questions:

- Is care safe?
- Is care effective?
- Is care compassionate?

RQIA has established a reputation as a fair and effective regulator. During the course of this strategy we intend to build on that reputation. Everything we do over the next three years will be centred on providing assurance in relation to delivery of the three key outcomes and seven strategic themes.

Finally, we thank everyone who kindly gave us their views as part of the consultation on this strategy.

Dr Alan Lennon OBE
Chairman

Glenn Houston
Chief Executive

There have been important and rapid changes in the economy, government policy, society and technology that shape the world in which we regulate and work. These affect what we will need to focus on in the next three years.

RQIA's statutory authority, to require registered providers to maintain compliance with regulations and minimum standards, is derived from the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and the associated regulations. All HSC organisations have, under the provisions of the 2003 Order, a statutory duty of quality.

RQIA is required to undertake the functions of conducting reviews, investigations and inspections of statutory bodies, and to publish its findings.

The most important priority for RQIA is to make sure that our inspection systems and processes convey clearly to the public how well a service is performing in respect of the regulations and attainment of compliance with the relevant minimum standards.

Services that are committed to best practice will be able to evidence a journey of continuous improvement.

Responsibility for delivering quality care lies with care professionals, clinical staff, health and social care trusts and independent provider organisations.

RQIA will support and encourage individuals and organisations operating in the care sector to be committed to the principles of best practice and continuous improvement.

Strategic Changes in Service Delivery

Transforming Your Care¹ (TYC) has set the strategic direction for the development of health and social care services since 2011. Quality 2020² is the DHSSPS strategic vision for improving quality in health and social care. During the course of this strategy we expect to see further advances in the outworking of TYC and Quality 2020.

This may result in new and emerging models of care and treatment, some of which may be regulated within the existing framework.

In addition, the existing regulatory framework may need to be revised to accommodate service delivery models that fall outside the current definitions.

A Changing Population

The population of Northern Ireland is projected to rise from 1.842 million in 2014 to 1.881 million in 2018. The population aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 27,000 in the same period³. We can celebrate the fact that people are living longer, healthier lives, whilst acknowledging that health and social care services are under increased pressure to meet the needs of an ageing population.

These changes will have significant impacts on the delivery of the health and social care services, including services regulated by RQIA.

¹ DHSSPS – Transforming Your Care – A Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

² DHSSPS – Quality 2020 – A 10 Year Strategy to Protect and Improve Quality in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

³ NI Statistics and Research Agency – Statistical Report – 2012 – Based Population Projections

Lessons from Inquiries and Investigations

There are important lessons from the Public Inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and other inquiries and reviews. These will impact on the future regulation of health and social care across the United Kingdom.

Similarly, we would expect that The Right Time, The Right Place (DHSSPS, December 2014); The Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-related deaths (ongoing at time of publication); and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Emergency Care, may impact on the way services are regulated in future.

The public expect that when providers fail to achieve the minimum standards, they will be held to account for these failings. Furthermore, the human rights based focus on health and social care will drive further improvement in the quality of care experienced by people who access services.

Emerging Developments

RQIA will take account of evidence of best practice in driving further improvements in our regulatory systems and processes. We will use findings from research to inform our approach.

We will take account of feedback from HSC bodies and regulated agencies and establishments, together with the views of the public who rely on our inspection reports, to determine how to streamline our regulatory systems and processes to make them more effective.

We will consider introducing a new performance rating system that will include an overall rating for quality. This will take account of ratings devised by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England, and the rating system used by other UK regulators such as the Care Inspectorate Scotland. These systems provide the public with a summary of the outcomes of the inspection of regulated services.

Advances in information technology are having major impacts on how people communicate and share knowledge and information. RQIA will make appropriate use of social media as an established communication channel.

Service users are better informed on key issues and problems in the health and social care sector, with media coverage of incidents, complaints and whistleblowing.

Greater use of intelligence and learning from examples of good and poor practice will assist in driving improved performance across the sector.

We will continue to participate in networks such as the Five Nations Heads of Inspectorate Forum and the European Partnership of Supervisory Organisations. This provides opportunities to share knowledge and benchmark our systems and processes, to help drive improvements in our approach to regulation, inspection and review.

On 1 April 2015 the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN) transferred from DHSSPS to RQIA. We welcome this opportunity as there is a strategic fit between the role of RQIA and GAIN.

During the course of this strategy we will seek to optimise the benefits of this arrangement in the best interests of those who use health and social care services in Northern Ireland.

Regulating in Austerity

Health and social care organisations spend £4.7 billion per annum, and are amongst the biggest employers in Northern Ireland. Regulating this sector is a huge undertaking, and one which requires efficient use of limited resources. In addition, RQIA must respond to emerging risks and concerns.

We are regulating in a period of financial austerity, and need to make the most of our available resources and capacity. There is a limit to the number of inspections, investigations and reviews we can carry out in any given year.

Currently, we are required to comply with the minimum inspection frequencies set out in the regulations. We will concentrate inspection activities where there is greater risk, and on organisations that are failing consistently to comply with the regulations and minimum standards.

We will increase the number of inspection of organisations that are deemed high risk, or where there are specific concerns. Risk varies in accordance with changing circumstances, and RQIA must be agile enough to respond to situations at the point where it matters most.

The Challenges Ahead and Our Response

RQIA, going forward, must continue to be an effective independent regulator, influencing external providers to deliver care in accordance with regulations and standards. We will strive to maintain a focus on quality assurance, whilst committing to drive quality improvement in the health and social care sector.

In both the statutory and independent sectors, RQIA has limited capacity and mechanisms to encourage service providers to continuously improve the delivery of care to appropriate standards.

We will maintain a strong focus on our statutory responsibilities, whilst using our knowledge, skills and expertise to influence policy and signpost opportunities to reform the statutes under which we operate.

There are likely to be significant challenges over the course of this strategy. We will work within our resources, to provide assurance to the public about the quality, safety and availability of health and social care in Northern Ireland.

We are a people focused organisation, and we will continue to invest in the workforce through our human resources and organisational development strategy. This will include a focus on recruitment and retention, appraisal, training and development and capacity planning.

We will build on the feedback from our successful Investors in People application in 2014, taking further steps to improve the leadership, management and development of our staff.

We will review our organisational structures to make sure that we are operating in the most efficient way possible.

We will make the most of the skills of our staff and maintain a robust workforce planning process to support our business requirements.

The RQIA Board is responsible for ensuring the effective governance of the organisation. The Board and its committee structures ensure that the organisation complies with the requirements set out in Standing Orders, and the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum with DHSSPS.

The Board will ensure that RQIA continues to operate effectively, and maintain a thorough risk oversight culture.

In response to the challenges we will:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of the systems and processes for the regulation and inspection of registered agencies and establishments, and implement agreed changes.
- Increase the number of unannounced inspections
- Consider introducing an overall rating for quality, in line with developments elsewhere, drawing on lessons from other regulators.
- Improve our use of information and intelligence from the sector to inform the inspection process, including information about incidents and complaints.
- Increase the use of lay assessors in the delivery of our inspection and review programme, ensuring the experiences of service users and carers inform our work
- Seek to develop stronger indicators of the impact of the recommendations and requirements arising from RQIA's inspections and reviews. We will do this by exploring opportunities to obtain independent verification of the impact of our work, and by publishing trend information on an annual basis.
- Continue to work in partnership with other regulators, including the Criminal Justice Inspection and the Education and Training Inspectorate. We will explore opportunities to develop specific projects with professional regulators, including the General Medical Council, General Dental Council and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.
- Share knowledge and information in the public interest with organisations including the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland and the Health and Safety Executive.

- Encourage service providers to be committed to a process of continuous improvement, in line with Quality 2020. We will give due recognition to providers who benchmark their performance against best practice standards.
- Encourage regulated services to aspire to external recognition using recognised marks of excellence such as IIP and EFQM, and the relevant industry standards such as ISO/IEC 17020.
- Through our programme of inspections and reviews, continue to identify and promote examples of best practice in the delivery of health and social care.
- Pursue with DHSSPS the opportunity to amend the Regulation and Improvement Authority Fees and Frequency of Inspections Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2005. Move to an intelligence based approach to inspection, to enable us to concentrate our inspection activity in areas of greater risk and to use the annual fees to cover the cost of additional inspections.

Any change in the role and function of RQIA will require DHSSPS approval and financial support, and will be influenced by RQIA's performance of its existing quality assurance functions.

This strategy sets out how we intend to deliver effective regulation over the course of the next three years by making sure that we provide the necessary assurance, to challenge poor practice and be a key driver for quality improvement.



Three key stakeholder outcomes (Figure 1) are identified in RQIA's strategy map (Figure 2). These are:

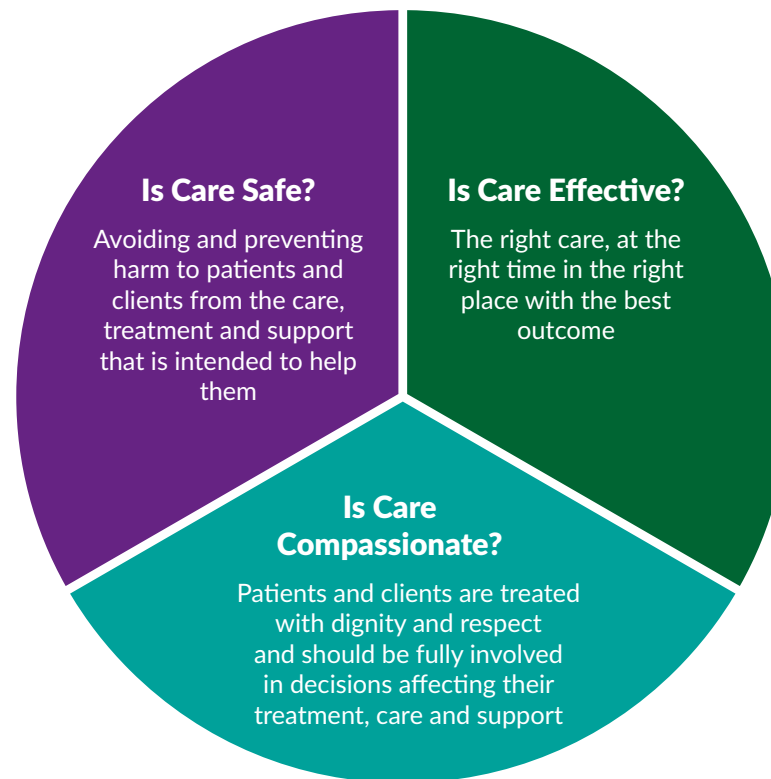
- Is care safe?
- Is care effective?
- Is care compassionate?

These stakeholder outcomes are aligned with Quality 2020 and define how we intend to demonstrate our effectiveness and impact as a regulator.

They also explain how we will act on behalf of our stakeholders to make independent and robust assessments to determine whether care is being provided safely, effectively and compassionately.

These stakeholder outcomes will be measured against seven strategic themes (Figure 3), outlined in this Corporate Strategy. They represent the pillars on which we will continue to build our success and achieve our vision.

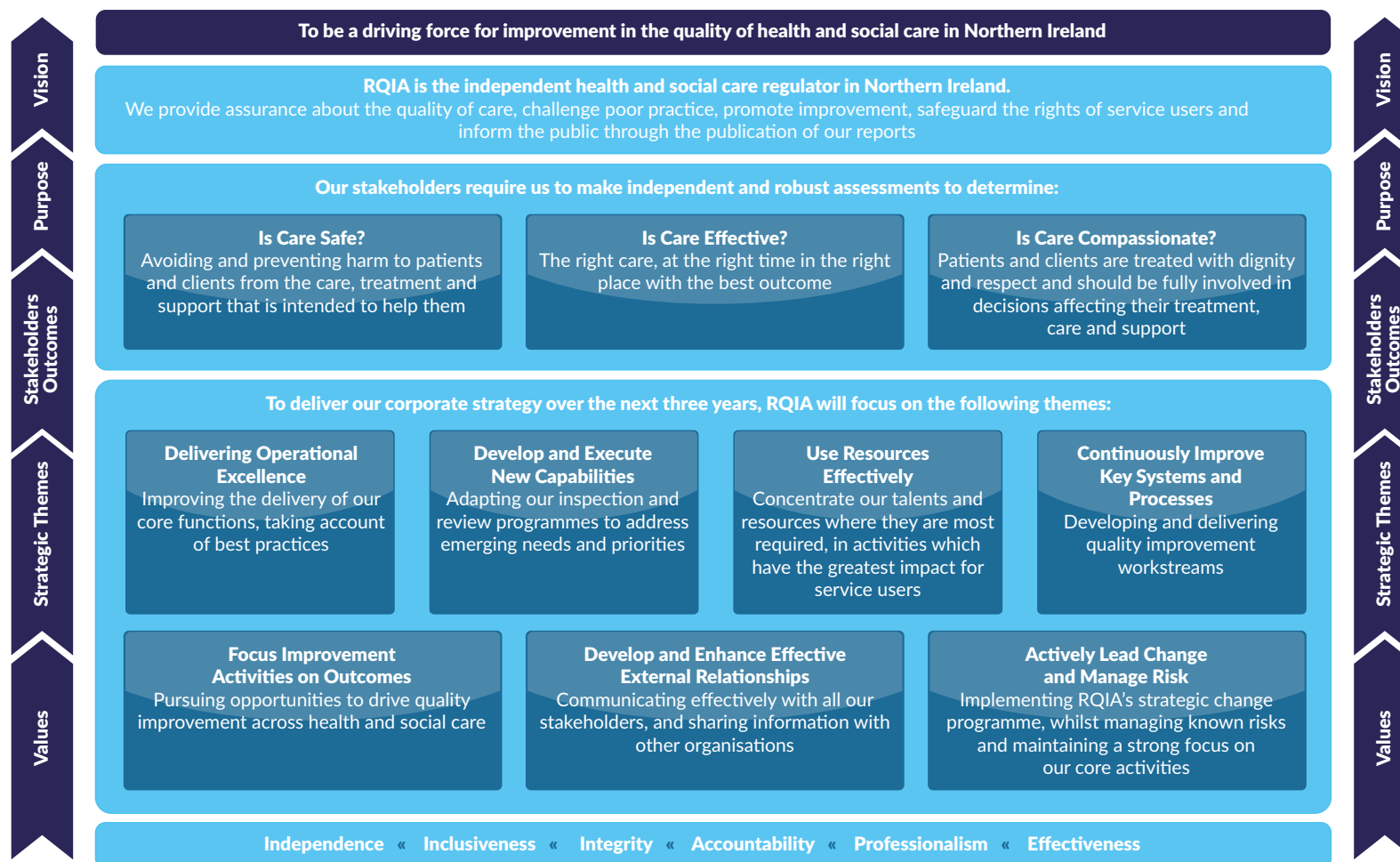
Figure 1: Stakeholder Outcomes



The development of RQIA's strategy map has been informed by a formal consultation process, with our key stakeholders and staff having the opportunity to contribute to its development.

There is a strong sense of ownership of this strategy map by the whole organisation. It continues to be a powerful tool in guiding everything we do.

Figure 2: RQIA Strategy Map 2015-18



Strategic Themes 2015-18

Figure 3: Strategic Themes 2015-18

To deliver our Corporate Strategy over the next three years, RQIA will focus on seven themes:



RQIA's seven strategic themes and the associated priorities are detailed in the table below:

Strategic Themes	Priorities
Deliver Operational Excellence We will improve the delivery of our core functions, taking account of best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a strategic review of inspection systems and processes • Redesign our inspection and review reports to better demonstrate our assessment of the delivery of safe, effective and compassionate care • Strengthen our internal quality assurance systems and processes • Develop our external communication systems and processes so that the public understand our role and responsibilities
Develop and Execute New Capabilities We will adapt our inspection and review programmes to address emerging needs and priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new programme of hospital inspections, with a specific focus on standards relating to safe, effective and compassionate care • Extend our regulatory oversight to include new service delivery models • Design new, and improve existing, inspection methodologies to discharge our statutory responsibilities • Respond to regulatory requirements of the new Mental Capacity Bill • Proactively engage with DHSSPS regarding opportunities to appropriately extend our range of regulatory functions and powers
Use Resources Effectively We will concentrate our resources where they are most required, in activities which have the greatest impact for service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond effectively to emerging risks by focusing inspection activities where they are most needed • Review the frequency of inspections and, where necessary, make recommendations to the DHSSPS to review the regulatory framework • Develop and maintain a competent, flexible and engaged workforce able to respond to strategic change • Undertake an analysis of workforce capacity to make informed decisions about how RQIA's workforce may need to respond to future needs and requirements

<p>Continuously Improve Key Systems and Processes</p> <p>We will develop and deliver quality improvement workstreams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide strategic assurance and oversight on strategic change and improvement through the Quality Improvement Steering Group • Make better use of information and intelligence from external sources • Improve analysis of available information to support our core functions • Optimise the use of information and communications technology to enable RQIA to deliver its current and future priorities • Implement a programme of continuous improvement workstreams
<p>Develop and Enhance Effective External Relationships</p> <p>We will communicate and engage effectively with people who use services, and collaborate with other HSC bodies, regulated services, and other regulators to share information and intelligence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and involve service users, carers and the public to obtain their views on the standard of care provision within health and social care services • Develop stronger partnerships with independent, voluntary and community groups • Strengthen our links with other regulators, professional bodies and organisations, to share intelligence to ensure that safety concerns are heard and acted upon • Work with other organisations to deliver Quality 2020 • Strengthen our focus on quality improvement by disseminating the learning from our core activities
<p>Focus Improvement Activities on Outcomes</p> <p>We will pursue opportunities to drive quality improvement across health and social care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a central focus on the experiences of service users and carers in the delivery of our inspections and reviews • Use external expertise to identify areas of improvement in health and social care • Actively participate in regional and national initiatives to drive safe, effective and compassionate care • Shift the balance of performance measures from internal processes and outputs to measures that will make independent and robust assessments to determine the outcome of care received by the service users
<p>Actively Lead Change and Manage Risk</p> <p>We will invest capacity in developing and leading RQIA's strategic change programme, whilst managing known risks and maintaining a strong focus on our core activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and strengthen our change management and leadership capacity and capability throughout the organisation • Identify and manage known and emerging risks that impact on our core functions • Identify and escalate risks in the services we regulate that could adversely impact on the safety of service users • Further strengthen our oversight and governance processes through smarter use of performance data and intelligence

Appropriate governance and accountability arrangements are in place to ensure that the strategy is effectively delivered.

The successful delivery of the strategy is dependent on:

- continuing to engage with key stakeholders
- maintaining robust performance management and reporting processes
- recruiting and retaining a skilled and dedicated workforce
- the availability of adequate funding

RQIA's Corporate Strategy 2015-18 will be kept under continuous review to ensure that it takes account of changes in the external environment, best practice and the needs of our stakeholders and service users.

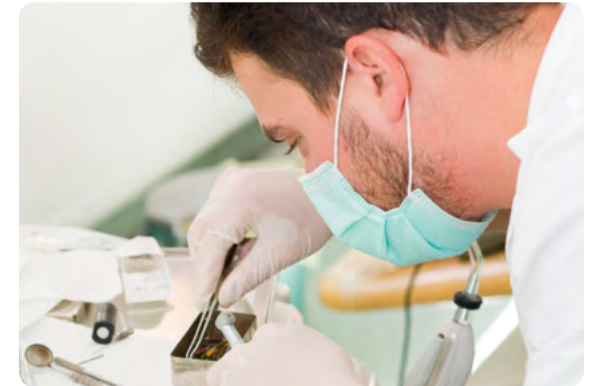
If there is a shortfall in staffing or financial resources, the implementation of this strategy will be adjusted accordingly.

The impact of every change to the Corporate Strategy will be carefully assessed and will be agreed with RQIA's Board and discussed in detail with DHSSPS.

Each year, RQIA will translate the seven strategic themes within the Corporate Strategy into an annual business plan.

Measures of success will be developed and incorporated into RQIA's business plan. These measures will help RQIA evaluate its impact, make better informed decisions and improve performance.

Organisational performance will be reviewed by RQIA's Board by means of quarterly corporate performance reports.





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