

PUBLIC SESSION

RQIA Authority Meeting

Thursday 12 December 2024 at 11:30 am

Lagan Room, The Mount Business and Conference Centre

<p>Present: Christine Collins (CC), Chair Stuart Elborn (SE) Cheryl Lamont (CL) Nazia Latif (NL) Alphy Maginness (AM) Mary McIvor (MMcI) Sarah Wakfer (SW)</p> <p>Apologies: Lynn Long (LL), Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare</p>	<p>RQIA Staff in Attendance: Briege Donaghy (BD), Chief Executive Elaine Connolly (EC), Director of Adult Care Services Jacqui Murphy (JM), Head of Corporate Affairs and Business Services Karen Harvey (KH), Professional Adviser of Social Work Ian Steele (IS), Medical Lead and Responsible Officer Malachy Finnegan (MF), Senior Communications Manager Aaron Addidle (AA), Business Support Officer Paul Cummings (PC), RQIA Financial Advisor</p>
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1.0 Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The meeting commenced at 12:36 pm, with the Chair (CC) welcoming all to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Lynn Long **(LL)**.

2.0 Agenda Item 2 - Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 17 October 2024 and Matters Arising

- 2.1 Members **APPROVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 17 October 2024 as a true and accurate record.
- 2.2 **Action List:**
Action 270: Bank of Ireland Mandate: Ongoing: PC advised the Authority that the Bank of Ireland are not following up on this matter.
- 2.3 CC noted that the current mandate is out of date as it lists the names of previous Authority Members.
- 2.4 PC advised that the Authority should not sign anything in this regard.

2.5 CC added that the Bank of Ireland considers RQIA to be an unincorporated body. CC noted that this is unacceptable. The Bank of Ireland must find a means of recognising the corporate status of bodies, beyond those incorporated under company law.

2.6 PC agreed to follow this matter up with the Bank of Ireland.

3.0 Agenda Item 3 - Declaration of Interests

3.1 CC asked Authority Members if, following consideration of the agenda items, any interests were required to be declared in line with the Standing Orders.

3.2 There were no interests declared.

4.0 Agenda Item 4 - Verbal Update on Joint Working between RQIA and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)

4.1 Marian O'Rourke (MO), Director of Regulations and Standards, NISCC and Helen McVicker (HMcV), Head of Fitness to Practice, NISCC and Suzanne Cunningham (SC), Assistant Director of Children's Services, RQIA, joined the meeting.

4.2 MO, HMcV, KH and SC delivered a presentation to the Authority on the joint working between RQIA and NISCC over the past year. The presentation focused on why and how the two organisations work together, the architecture of the joint working, joint initiatives, joint engagement and future plans.

4.3 The Authority thanked colleagues for the comprehensive presentation and noted the importance of the positive relationship and significant joint working undertaken by RQIA and NISCC. The Authority wished MO well in her upcoming retirement.

4.4 The Authority **NOTED** the update on the joint working between RQIA and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

5.0 Agenda Item 5 – Chair's Business: Verbal Update

a) Organisational Cultural Review of RQIA

b) Transfer of HSCQI to RQIA

5.1 a) Organisational Cultural Review of RQIA

CC reminded Members that the Review Report had been shared with all staff and staff feedback was delivered by the Independent Assessors on 3 and 10 December 2024. CC noted that the next steps are for a Summary Report outlining the recommendations to be produced and an action plan to be drafted in consultation with staff, which will be conjoined with the action plan arising from the Investors in People (IiP) Reaccreditation when that assessment is complete.

5.2 JM reminded Members that an opportunity will be offered to Authority Members to meet with the IiP Assessor in early January 2025, as part of the engagement sessions.

5.3 CC encouraged as high attendance as possible at that session as it is important that Authority Members are able to speak with the Assessor.

- 5.4 The Authority **NOTED** the update in relation to the Organisational Cultural Review of RQIA.
- 5.5 **b) Transfer of HSCQI to RQIA**
The Authority welcomed the formal transfer of HSCQI to RQIA on 1 November 2024.
- 5.6 CC noted that this offers RQIA a unique opportunity to develop its role in encouraging improvement in Health and Social Care (HSC) Services.
- 5.7 BD advised that workshops have been organised between November 2024 – March 2025, which will focus on integration of HSCQI and the role QI plays in RQIA and the wider system.
- 5.8 The Authority **NOTED** the update on the transfer of HSCQI to RQIA.
- 6.0 Agenda Item 6 – Members Activity Report**
- 6.1 CC noted that the Activity Report demonstrates a substantial volume of activity undertaken by the Authority. CC thanked AM and NL specifically for their involvement with the Cultural Review, in terms of the time dedicated to the work.
- CC advised Members that the Public Appointments process will commence in early 2025 to appoint two new Authority Members. Applications will be sought from candidates who have a nursing and digital background.
- 6.2 The Authority **NOTED** the Members Activity Report.
- 7.0 Agenda Item 7 - Business, Appointments and Remuneration Committee (BARC): Update**
a) Meeting of the 7 November 2024: Verbal Update
b) Policies and MoUs
i. Memorandum of Understanding: Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)
c) Activity Performance and Outcomes Report: Quarter 2, 2024/2025
d) Workforce Update
e) Inquiries Update
f) RQIA Equality Working Group Update
g) RQIA Communications and Involvement Working Group Update
h) Digital Update
- 7.1 **a) Meeting of the 7 November 2024: Verbal Update**
SE advised Members that BARC had an in-depth discussion in relation to RQIA policy development at its most recent meeting. BARC was advised that policy development is co-ordinated by Executive Management Team (EMT) groups, each of which has a policy lead within that group. These groups all report to EMT. SE noted that RQIA has a significant number of policies that require review and BARC discussed the need for logical prioritisation.
- 7.2 **b) Policies and MoUs**
i. Memorandum of Understanding: Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)
SE presented the MoU to the Authority, of which BARC was fully supportive.

- 7.3 AM noted that the MoU refers to the Data Protection Act 1998, whereas it should reflect the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 7.4 JM agreed to raise this with the relevant RQIA colleagues to amend.
- 7.5 The Authority **APPROVED** the Memorandum of Understanding with the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.
- 7.6 **c) Activity Performance and Outcomes Report: Quarter 2, 2024/2025**
SE presented the report and advised that, given current limitations in capacity and resource, RQIA remains unable to fulfil its statutory duty in terms of frequency of inspections for some service types. BARC Members remarked positively on the noticeable improvement in registration performance.
- SE drew attention to the publication of children's inspection reports and noted that further focus is required to ensure reports are published in line with Key Performance Indicators. The Committee is mindful that the Children's Team remain in a pilot phase of publication of these reports.
- 7.7 The Authority **APPROVED** the Activity Performance and Outcomes Report: Quarter 2, 2024/2025.
- 7.8 **d) Workforce Update**
SE noted that the Committee received updates on recruitment to Executive Team positions, the transfer of HSCQI to RQIA and the updated proposed management structure of RQIA, which BARC recommended for Authority approval.
- The Committee was also updated on the ongoing Investors in People (IiP) re-accreditation.
- 7.9 The Authority **NOTED** the Workforce Update and **APPROVED** the adjusted Management structure.
- 7.10 **e) Inquiries Update**
SE reported that the Committee received a comprehensive update in relation to RQIA's significant work in public inquiries, in particular the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry, the Covid-19 Inquiry and the Deceased Patients Review Phase 3.
- 7.11 The Authority **NOTED** the Inquiries Update.
- 7.12 **f) RQIA Equality Working Group Update**
SE outlined the work of the Equality Working Group at its last meeting in October 2024, which primarily focused on Human Rights Training for RQIA staff and accessibility arrangements at James House.
- 7.13 The Authority **NOTED** the RQIA Equality Working Group Update.
- 7.14 **g) RQIA Communications and Involvement Working Group Update**
SE advised that the Committee received a comprehensive update on the work of the RQIA Communications and Involvement Working Group and received specific updates in relation to complaints, front of house services, and publications and events.

- 7.15 The Authority **NOTED** the RQIA Communications and Involvement Working Group Update.
- 7.16 **h) Digital Update**
SE noted that the Committee received an update in relation to the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the replacement of iConnect.
- 7.17 BD added that work continues on drafting the OBC and it may be appropriate to call an Extraordinary Meeting of BARC in early 2025 to consider the OBC prior to seeking Authority approval.
- 7.18 The Authority **NOTED** the Digital Update.
- 8.0 Agenda Item 8 - Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC): Update**
- a) Meeting of the 28 November 2024: Verbal Update**
- b) Decisions Regarding Outstanding Debtors**
- c) Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs): Reviewed and Updated**
- d) Draft Mid-Year Assurance Statement**
- e) Risk Management**
- i. **Principal Risk Document**
- ii. **Addition to the Principal Risk Document: iConnect**
- iii. **Risk Register: Directorate of Mental Health, Learning Disability, Childrens' Services and Prison Healthcare**
- f) External Audit Update**
- g) Internal Audit Update**
- h) RQIA Audit Action Plan**
- i) Standing Reports to Audit Committee**
- 8.1 **a) Meeting of the 28 November 2024: Verbal Update**
- 8.2 **b) Decisions Regarding Outstanding Debtors**
SW advised the Authority that ARAC is seeking approval to write off debts totalling £540. SW noted that ARAC agreed that debts of less than £2,000 fell to the authority of the Chief Executive to write off and an annual report would be tabled at ARAC and the Authority. If a significant debt required a decision, this would be considered by ARAC.
- 8.3 The Authority **APPROVED** the write off of £540 debts.
- 8.4 **c) Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs): Reviewed and Updated**
SW presented the SFIs and noted that these will be appended to the RQIA Standing Orders when their review is complete.
- 8.5 JM advised that clarification was sought from the Business Services Organisation in relation to the addition of a section on legal liabilities and this since been added to the SFIs. The same wording is used across all arms-length bodies (ALBs).
- 8.6 The Authority **APPROVED** the Standing Financial Instructions.
- 8.7 **d) Draft Mid-Year Assurance Statement**
SW advised Members that ARAC considered the draft Mid-Year Assurance Statement in detail at its last meeting. The Chief Executive drew particular attention to the issues of the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry, Workforce and the Changing Strategic Environment for Health and Social Care Provision.

- 8.8 The Authority **APPROVED** the Mid-Year Assurance Statement.
- 8.9 **e) Risk Management**
i. Principal Risk Document
SW presented the Principal Risk Document (PRD) to the Authority and noted that considerable work has been undertaken and, as agreed at the November 2024 Authority Workshop, further work to re-format the PRD will be undertaken ahead of the next ARAC Meeting in February 2025.
- 8.10 The Authority **APPROVED** the Principal Risk Document.
- 8.11 **ii. Addition to the Principal Risk Document: iConnect**
SW advised the Authority that RQIA faces a significant risk if it is not able to complete the replacement of iConnect within a specific timescale. This would result in RQIA not having an operational information system. The risks and actions being taken to close the gaps are outlined in this new risk.
- 8.12 The Authority **APPROVED** the addition of the iConnect risk to the Principal Risk Document.
- 8.13 **iii. Risk Register: Directorate of Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare**
SW stated that ARAC had a useful session engaging with the Assistant Director for Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare on the Directorate Risk Register. It was good for ARAC to be aware of the operational issues facing that Directorate and how its leadership team are mitigating the three current risks.
- 8.14 The Authority **APPROVED** the Directorate of Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare Risk Register.
- 8.15 **f) External Audit Update**
SW advised that the Committee received a report on The National Fraud Initiative in Northern Ireland 2024 and noted good outcomes on identifying fraud across public sector bodies.
- 8.16 The Authority **NOTED** the External Audit Update.
- 8.17 **g) Internal Audit Update**
SW reported that RQIA had received satisfactory assurance in the recent Information Governance Audit. SW drew attention to the satisfactory assurance that had been received by the Accounts Payable Department in the Business Services Organisation (BSO), which provides this service to RQIA.
- 8.18 The Authority **NOTED** the Internal Audit Update.
- 8.19 **h) RQIA Audit Action Plan**
SW advised that the Audit Action Plan details those Priority 1 or 2 recommendations that are partially implemented or still to be implemented. SW noted that RQIA continues to have a high implementation rate in respect of audit recommendations and reported that none are classified as Priority 1's.
- 8.20 The Authority **APPROVED** the RQIA Audit Action Plan.

- 8.21 **i) Standing Reports to Audit Committee**
SW considered the Standing Reports as read and advised that ARAC did not feel there was anything of concern for discussion by the full Authority.
- SW queried the reason for a nil response on the Whistleblowing report.
- 8.22 JM advised that the last whistleblowing within RQIA was during 2023 / 2024 and therefore would not be included in the 2024 / 2025 report.
- 8.23 The Authority **NOTED** the Standing Reports to Audit Committee.
- 9.0 Agenda Item 9 - Legislative and Policy Committee (LPC): Verbal Update**
- 9.1 AM provided an update for the Authority on the previous meeting of the LPC.
- The Committee considered legal advice on the Mental Health Order (Northern Ireland) 1986 and on Independent Medical Agencies. The Committee was updated on ongoing policy work in relation to children's services.
- AM continued by updating the Authority on ongoing legal cases that RQIA is involved in and provided a brief update on RQIA's involvement with ongoing public inquiries.
- AM concluded by advising that the Committee noted RQIA's response to the Consultation on commencement of provisions under the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 relating to Acts of Restraint: RQIA Response.
- 9.2 The Authority **NOTED** the Legislative and Policy Committee: Verbal Update.
- 10.0 Agenda Item 10 - Mental Health Committee (MHC): Update**
- a) Meeting of the 3 October 2024: Verbal Update**
- b) Draft Terms of Reference**
- i. Mental Health Committee**
- ii. Medical Appointments Panel**
- c) Service User Experience**
- d) Communications: Verbal Update: Joint Event RQIA / Royal College of Psychiatrists**
- e) Medical Appointments: Year to Date 2024**
- f) Regulation: Verbal Update: Mental Health, Learning Disability Team Activity Year to Date 2024**
- 10.1 **a) Meeting of the 3 October 2024: Verbal Update**
- 10.2 **b) Draft Terms of Reference**
- i. Mental Health Committee**
- ii. Medical Appointments Panel**
- 10.3 **i. Mental Health Committee**
MMCI presented the Mental Health Committee (MHC) Terms of Reference and noted that the MHC is established in a similar manner to the LPC, where there is consideration of legislative and policy matters, specifically in relation to mental health and learning disability services. MMCI highlighted the close working relationship that will be established between the MHC and LPC, when, for example, requests are made for legal advice.

MMcI noted that the MHC is a full Committee of the Authority and constitutes part of RQIA's governance framework.

- 10.4 The Authority **APPROVED** the Terms of Reference for the Mental Health Committee.
- 10.5 **ii. Medical Appointments Panel**
MMcI presented the Panel's Terms of Reference and noted that all Authority Members are members of this Panel and sit on the Panel on a rotational basis. MMcI outlined that the Panel will now be a sub-committee of the MHC and will report to the Authority through the MHC. MMcI advised that there is no change to the constitution or purpose of the Panel.
- 10.6 The Authority **APPROVED** the Medical Appointments Panel Terms of Reference.
- 10.7 **c) Service User Experience**
The Committee considered how it would be best kept informed of RQIA's engagement with, and involvement of, service users. The Committee agreed to consider this when looking at how RQIA will report its performance to the Committee. MMcI advised that given the importance of this area, the Committee agreed that it should remain a standing item on Committee Meeting agendas.
- 10.8 The Authority **NOTED** the update on Service User Experience.
- 10.9 **d) Communications: Verbal Update: Joint Event RQIA / Royal College of Psychiatrists**
MMcI informed the Committee that RQIA will be meeting with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to commence discussions on hosting a joint event in 2025.
- 10.10 The Authority **NOTED** the update on the Joint RQIA / Royal College of Psychiatrist's Event.
- 10.11 **e) Medical Appointments: Year to Date 2024**
MMcI presented the list of Medical Appointments made by the Medical Appointments Panel in the year to date.
- 10.12 The Authority **NOTED** the Medical Appointments: Year to Date 2024.
- 10.13 **f) Regulation: Verbal Update: Mental Health, Learning Disability Team Activity Year to Date 2024**
MMcI advised that the Committee had a lengthy discussion on what information should be reported to the Committee to assure it that RQIA is fulfilling its functions under the Mental Health Order (Northern Ireland) 1986 and the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, as well as under the 2003 Order. The Committee agreed to give the matter further consideration and noted that a workshop of the full Authority may be useful to consider this matter in detail.
- 10.14 The Authority **NOTED** the update on Mental Health, Learning Disability Team Activity Year to Date 2024.
- 10.15 MMcI left the meeting at 1.14 pm.

11.0 **Agenda Item 11- Financial Performance Report: 2024 / 2025 Month 7 (EP3: Resources)**

11.1 The Chief Executive presented the Financial Report and asked PC to provide a verbal update to the Authority.

11.2 PC reminded the Authority that the budget allocation for 2024 / 2025 had been higher than projected and RQIA has had some success at receiving approval of business cases. In light of this, RQIA is currently projected to have a small surplus at year-end and a significant volume of work is ongoing to ensure break-even is achieved.

PC advised that a small amount of ring-fenced funding for the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry legal costs and costs for the Deceased Patients Review Phase 3 had to be returned to the DoH as underspends were projected and this funding can only be spent in those specific areas. This has been as a result of lower than projected counsel costs and slower than expected projections in the Deceased Patients Review.

11.3 AM left the meeting at 1.16 pm.

11.4 PC continued that there has been lower than projected pay spend due to several vacancies at a senior level such as the upcoming retirement of the Responsible Officer, Head of Business Services and a Director. PC advised that the DoH had recently written to all ALBs asking for any resource that was not needed to be returned so as this could be allocated to a 2024 / 2025 pay award for HSC staff. PC concluded by noting that RQIA was on course to break-even.

11.5 CC thanked BD and PC for the report and noted that it was positive to be in a surplus position with the opportunity to spend money on areas which RQIA did not think it could at the beginning of the financial year.

11.6 PC advised the Authority that RQIA, like all other ALBs, was required to submit a savings plan of 1% savings every year for the next three years. PC noted that in year one this could be made under goods and services.

11.7 The Authority **APPROVED** the Financial Performance Report: 2024 / 2025 Month 7.

12.0 **Agenda Item 12 – Any Other Business**

12.1 CC took the opportunity to express the Authority's profound thanks to IS for his diligent work and support to the Authority over the last two and half years. The Authority wished IS a long and happy retirement.

There being no further business, CC closed the meeting at 1.24 pm and thanked all Members and RQIA staff in attendance.


Date of Next Meeting:

- Authority Meeting: Thursday 27 March 2025, virtual via MS Teams.



Signed 
Christine Collins MBE
Chair

Date 27 March 2025

Authority Action List: Meeting of 12 December 2024

Action Number	Authority Meeting	Agreed Action	Responsible Person	Date due for Completion	Status
270	28 March 2024	<p>Bank of Ireland Mandate: Bank of Ireland Mandate: Authority Chair to share Bank of Ireland correspondence with Financial Advisor, who will follow up with the Business Services Organisation (BSO) and Bank.</p> <p>Financial Advisor to continue to follow up with the Business Services Organisation (BSO) and Bank.</p>	Financial Advisor	26 September 2024	

Key

Behind Schedule	
In Progress	
Completed or ahead of Schedule	