



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cailíocht Sláinte

Your guide to the
National Quality
Standards for
Residential Care
Settings for Older
People in Ireland



Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People

The Health Information and Quality Authority has developed these standards to help protect the rights of older people living in residential care settings such as nursing homes. When people move into such settings, it is very important that the care they receive protects their rights, and allows them to lead as full lives as possible in a caring and respectful environment.

The Health Information and Quality Authority (the Authority) is the independent organisation set up in 2007 to drive quality and safety and monitor the care provided to people using our health and social care services. As a priority, and at the request of the Minister for Health and Children, the Authority developed the *National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland* to help improve and to assure the quality and safety of care provided to older people.

We did not develop these standards on our own. We set up a working group of service providers, older people's advocacy groups, people involved in the care and treatment of older people, the Department of Health and Children, and the Health Service Executive. When the working group completed a set of draft standards we published them to give residents in residential care settings, their relatives and carers, and members of the public an opportunity to share their views on the proposed standards before they were finalised. We also held meetings with residents in residential care settings and their relatives and carers to hear their views on the key issues relating to safety and quality of care in residential care settings, and to consider the extent to which those issues were addressed within the draft standards.

The comments, views and suggestions obtained from the public consultation process were carefully considered and informed the final set of *National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland*.



The Standards

The standards cover what is felt to be important to residents and what they can expect from the service provider. There are 32 standards in total. Each standard is supported by a number of criteria. The criteria set out in detail ways in which the standards can be met by the service providers.

The standards make it clear that everything about the service should contribute to you enjoying a good quality of life and experiencing care that is positive, person-centred, safe and respectful of you as an individual.

The Social Services Inspectorate within the Authority will use the standards to inspect and report on the quality of the service. All services, whether run by the Health Service Executive (HSE), private providers or voluntary organisations will be inspected and those that meet the standards will be registered. Only registered services will be allowed to provide residential care services to older people.

The standards are grouped into seven sections and cover:

- ▶ the rights of residents
- ▶ protection of residents
- ▶ health and social care needs
- ▶ quality of life
- ▶ staffing
- ▶ the care environment
- ▶ management and governance.

There are also extra criteria that apply to residential care settings that specialise in the care of people with dementia.

So what do these Standards mean to you?

The purpose of these standards is to help to ensure that the needs of all people living in residential care settings are met. The standards cover the following areas:

1 Your Rights:

- ▶ You have easily accessible information, written in a language and format appropriate to your needs, to assist you in decision making.
- ▶ You are encouraged to express your views on any aspect of the residential care setting. You are consulted in relation to the organisation of the care setting and are given the option to participate in the organisation of the care setting if you wish to.
- ▶ Your consent to treatment and care is sought.
- ▶ Your privacy and dignity is respected.
- ▶ You are helped to exercise your civil, political and religious rights, in accordance with your own wishes.
- ▶ Any complaint that you, your family, friends or representatives may have is listened to and acted upon and there is an effective appeals procedure in the event of a disagreement about whether your complaint has been resolved.
- ▶ You receive a written contract from the provider of the residential care service that sets out what will be provided to you, and includes fees and any additional costs.

2 Your Protection:

- ▶ You are protected from bullying, neglect, harassment, discrimination and all other forms of abuse.
- ▶ Your interests are protected by policies and practices that safeguard your finances.
- ▶ Whenever staff are involved in assisting you with your finances this is carefully recorded and where possible you sign these records as well.

3 Your Health and Social Care Needs

- ▶ You receive assessments of your health, personal and social care needs prior to and during your stay as your needs and circumstances change.
- ▶ You can participate in and contribute to your assessments and the decisions made about your care are communicated to you or a family member in accordance with your wishes.
- ▶ You have a care plan, which is developed with you and sets out your individual preferences and support and care needs, and how these are to be met, in a way that you find acceptable. Your care plan is changed as your needs and preferences change.
- ▶ You benefit from policies and practices that promote your health, rehabilitation and wellbeing, for example, pursuing healthy lifestyle choices and recreational activities.
- ▶ You are consulted on your health and social care needs and they are reviewed and met on an ongoing basis.

- ▶ You are protected by the policies and procedures of the residential care setting with regard to medication management. You can be confident that there are comprehensive systems in place for its safe storage and administration.
- ▶ You benefit from your medication and will not suffer unnecessarily from illness caused by the excessive, inappropriate or inadequate consumption of medicines.
- ▶ You can be confident that the staff will monitor your medication and the condition for which it has been prescribed.
- ▶ Sensitive care will be provided for people who are dying and their families, with specialist services made available if they are needed.
- ▶ The staff will make sure that the relatives and friends of people who are dying can spend as much time with them at this time in accordance with the person's wishes.
- ▶ You can decide the type of physical, personal and spiritual care you would prefer at the end of your life, including your preferred place of death. You can also tell staff how you wish them to deal with your personal possessions.

4 Your Quality of Life

- ▶ You can exercise choice and control over your life and you will be encouraged and enabled to maximise your independence in accordance with your wishes.
- ▶ Your lifestyle in the residential care setting matches, as far as possible, your life before entering the care setting and your social, cultural, religious and recreational interests and needs are satisfied in accordance with your wishes.
- ▶ You will receive a nutritious and varied diet in pleasant surroundings. If you have special dietary needs, these will be catered for. Your meals are served at conventional mealtimes. Snacks are available throughout the day. Fresh drinking water is always available.
- ▶ Your family, friends and others will be able to visit you and you will be encouraged to maintain contact with them and the local community in accordance with your wishes. If you want to spend time with your visitors in private you are able to do so.
- ▶ If you have special behavioural needs, these will be managed and responded to effectively in an environment that promotes wellbeing and has the least restrictions.

5 Staffing

- ▶ Staff are suitably qualified and are checked to ensure that they are safe to work in the residential care setting.
- ▶ The staff providing you with support and care have the knowledge and skills gained from the experience of working with people whose needs are similar to yours. New staff are helped to get this experience as part of a planned training programme.
- ▶ There are enough staff on duty, both day and night, to ensure that the needs of all residents are met.
- ▶ Staff receive ongoing professional development to ensure that their skills and qualifications are up to date and to learn about new guidance.
- ▶ Staff are supported in their work by receiving regular supervision.



6 The Care Environment

- ▶ The physical environment enhances the quality of your life and the care setting is a pleasant place to live. It meets your needs in a comfortable and homely way
- ▶ You are able to move around easily in the premises and in its grounds. There is a safe outdoor space, like a garden or patio area, that has seating and is maintained in an attractive way. If you live in a setting that does not have a garden area you still have access to outdoor activities. When you are indoors the height of the windows allow you to see out when you are seated.
- ▶ The residential care setting is run in a way that protects you from avoidable risk or harm, including physical harm and infection.
- ▶ The premises are kept clean, hygienic and free from offensive odours. There are systems in place to control the spread of infection.
- ▶ You can bring personal belongings with you and if you choose you can provide some of your own furnishings. You will have a lockable storage space for your personal belongings and valuables.
- ▶ The door to your bedroom will have a lock which you can use. Staff will be able to open the door in an emergency.
- ▶ If you share a room there will be screening that ensures your personal privacy.

- ▶ You receive information about what to do if there is a fire or other emergency.
- ▶ Different requirements are set out for buildings that already exist and for new buildings, such as room sizes and the number of toilets and bathrooms. The details of which are set out in the full version of the standards.
- ▶ Your health and safety and that of your visitors and staff is promoted and protected.



7 Governance and Management

- ▶ The person in charge is a nurse who has the professional training, expertise and experience to manage the residential care setting.
- ▶ There are policies and procedures covering a range of issues, all of which are to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents. They cover areas such as administration of medication, health and safety, fire safety, staff training, managing risk, and record keeping including recording incidents and complaints, and many others.
- ▶ The person in charge ensures that staff know the details of these policies and procedures and that they implement them.
- ▶ There is a written statement that sets out the service that is provided in the residential care setting and describes the manner in which it is provided. It covers areas such as the number of residents that the residential care setting can accommodate and the services and facilities it provides.
- ▶ Managers work together in a way that supports and promotes the delivery of a quality care service.
- ▶ The quality of care and experience of the residents is monitored and reviewed so that the service you receive is continually developed and improved upon.

Dementia-specific Residential Care Units for Older People

Dementia-specific residential care units care exclusively for people with dementia. All the above standards apply to dementia-specific units, however, they must also meet additional criteria if they are to meet the specific needs of people with dementia, which allows them to live the fullest lives possible. These criteria cover:

- ▶ the diagnosis of dementia
- ▶ promoting the understanding of residents and family members of the nature of dementia
- ▶ care planning and assessment for people with dementia
- ▶ the provision of person-centred care
- ▶ the use of appropriate therapies and techniques
- ▶ facilitating communication
- ▶ staffing arrangements, practice development and staff training, and
- ▶ the physical design, layout and configuration of dementia specific units.

Further information

The *National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland* are summarised in this document. A full version of the standards can be obtained from the Health Information and Quality Authority, Social Services Inspectorate, George's Court, George's Lane, Dublin 7. The standards can also be downloaded from the Authority's website: **www.hiqa.ie**.



For more information please visit:
www.hiqa.ie