



**Health  
Information  
and Quality  
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis  
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

# Your guide to the Draft National Standards for Special Care Units

September 2014

*Safer Better Care*

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# Who are we?

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent organisation. It has the legal power and responsibility for improving the quality, safety and value of certain health and social care services in Ireland.

HIQA is also responsible for:

- setting standards
- monitoring and inspecting services
- providing guidance on health information
- carrying out health technology assessments



# Why were the Standards developed?

HIQA has developed the Draft National Standards for Special Care Units in preparation for changes to the legislation which governs us, the Health Act 2007. When the relevant changes to law are made, all special care units will have to be registered with HIQA.

A child is placed in a special care unit when their behaviour poses a risk of harm to their life, health, safety, development or welfare and where placement in a special care unit is necessary for their care and protection.

This guide outlines the draft standards that special care units need to meet so that they can be registered by HIQA.

# Who do the Standards apply to?

HIQA was set up to help improve the safety and quality of many of Ireland's health and social care services. It will be responsible for the regulation of special care units.

Regulation of special care units involves using National Standards, different types of legal obligations to decide whether services are providing safe and effective care for

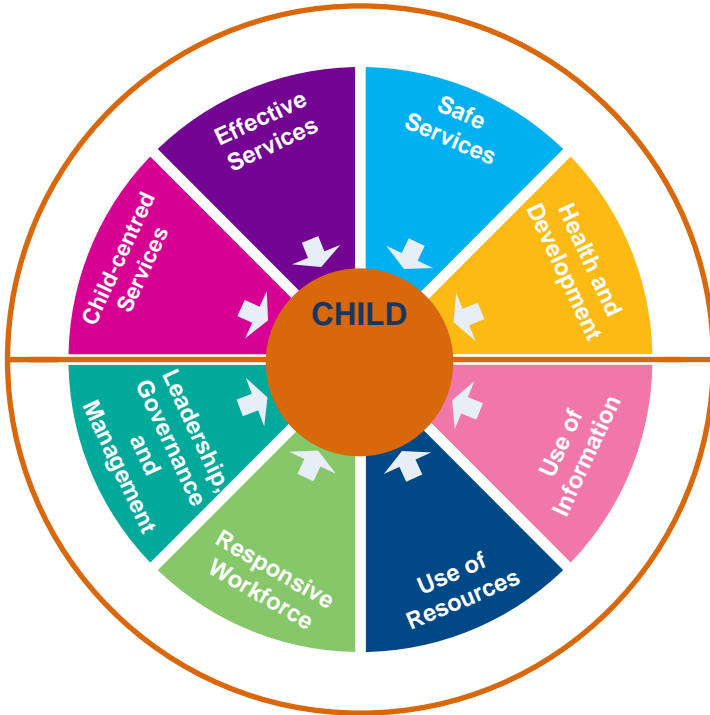
the children who live there. This is done through keeping a register (or list) of centres and monitoring and inspecting them on a regular basis to check that they are meeting the Standards and their legal obligations. By regulating services, we can make sure that the quality of care provided to children is high, no matter who is running the service.

The Standards will apply to all special care units run by the Child and Family Agency, or a private organisation or a voluntary body.

## **What do the Draft Standards cover?**

Each section is divided into specific standards which aim to improve services for children in special care units. These Draft Standards are grouped into eight key areas called themes.

## The themes of the National Standards



## The Standards

Each Standard describes an 'outcome'. This is what the special care unit should do to provide a good quality and safe service for children. There are also a number of features for each standard, and these describe what a special care unit is likely to be doing in order to meet the standard.

## Overview of what each standard theme means

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description of theme</b>
<b>Child-centred Services</b>	This is how special care units place children at the centre of what they do. This includes protecting the rights of children.
<b>Effective services</b>	This is how special care units deliver best outcomes for children, using best available evidence and information.
<b>Safe services</b>	This theme outlines how special care units protect children through preventing and minimising harm and learning from things when they go wrong.
<b>Health and development</b>	This deals with how special care units identify and promote optimum health and development for children.
<b>Leadership, governance and management</b>	This is how special care units are organised and run, how they arrange accountability, decision making, management of risks and dangers, as well as meeting their strategic, legal and financial obligations.
<b>Use of resources</b>	This is how special care units use best resources to deliver the best achievable outcomes for children for the money and resources used.
<b>Responsive Workforce</b>	This involves planning, recruiting, managing and organising staff with the necessary numbers, skills and abilities to respond to the needs of children.
<b>Use of information</b>	This is how special care units actively use information as a resource for planning, delivering, monitoring, managing and improving their services.

## How to give your feedback

The Draft Standards are available for consultation for a period of six weeks. You can get the full version of the Draft Standards from our website, [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie).

We will consider and review all feedback received and following this process, and will publish a final version of the National Standards. The closing date for receipt of submissions is the close of business on Monday 10 November 2014.

There are three ways to tell us what you think:

- Complete the online consultation feedback form by clicking a link on our website, [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie).
- Download the consultation feedback form from [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie) and email your completed forms to [standards@hiqa.ie](mailto:standards@hiqa.ie).
- Print off a copy of the feedback form from our website and post it to us at:

Health Information and Quality Authority  
Draft National Standards for Special Care Units  
George's Court  
George's Lane  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7.

For further information or if you have any questions you can talk to the consultation team by calling 01 814 7627.



# Draft National Standards for Special Care Units



## Theme 1: Child-centred Services

This theme describes how special care units place children at the centre of what they do. This includes providing child-centred services, access to information and protection of the rights of children. It says:

- The rights and diversity of each child are respected and promoted.
- The privacy and dignity of each child are respected.
- Children exercise choice in their daily lives.
- Each child develops and maintains relationships with family, community and other people who play an important role in their lives.
- Special care units communicate appropriately with children and provide information that takes account of their communication needs.
- Each child participates in decision making and has access to an advocate.
- Each child is listened to and their concerns and complaints are acted upon in a timely and effective manner.

## Theme 2: Effective Services

This section describes how special care units can deliver effective services to children using best available evidence and information. It says:

- Children are only placed in special care units by the High Court under a special care order.
- Children have a programme of special care which sets out their needs, and which also outlines the supports they need to maximise their personal development.
- The special care unit is homely and promotes the welfare, dignity and safety of each child.
- Children are actively supported in the transition from special care and all transitions occur in a timely manner with planned supports in place.
- Each special care unit has a detailed care record of each child.

## Theme 3: Safe Services

This section describes how special care units can deliver safe services for children using best available evidence and information. It says:

- Each child is safeguarded from abuse and neglect and their protection and welfare is promoted.
- Each child experiences care that supports positive behaviour and emotional wellbeing.
- Children are not subjected to a restrictive procedure unless it is needed because of a serious risk to their safety and welfare or the safety and welfare of others.
- Incidents are managed and reviewed in a timely manner and outcomes inform practice at all levels.

## Theme 4: Health and Development

This section outlines how health, education, social and emotional development and relationships with family and community are all important factors in a child's development. It says:

- The health and development of each child is promoted.
- Each child receives a health assessment and is given appropriate support to meet any identified need.
- Children have opportunities to maximise their individual strengths and abilities through education.

## Theme 5: Leadership, Governance, and Management

'Governance' describes how a special care unit is organised and run. This section covers the arrangements put in place by the special care unit in areas such as accountability, decision making and managing risks and dangers. It says:

- There are clear lines of accountability at all levels so that everyone working in the special care unit is aware of their responsibilities and to whom they are answerable to.
- The special care unit has a statement of purpose that states in writing its aims and objectives, the services it provides, including how and where they are provided.
- Good governance systems are in place to check ongoing practice and monitor how it is performing in order to support child-centred, effective and safe services.
- The special care unit has an agreement in place with the organisation that is funding the special care unit outlining the nature and conditions of the services being provided.

## Theme 6: Use of Resources

This theme describes how the special care unit can best use its money and resources to deliver services in the best possible way. It says:

- The special care unit looks for opportunities to use its resources to provide improved services and achieve better outcomes for children.
- Decisions about resources take into account the needs of children and the levels of demand on the service.
- Individuals who make decisions on how resources are used are accountable for the decisions made and they ensure these decisions are well informed.

## Theme 7: Responsive Workforce

This theme includes all people that work directly or indirectly with the special care unit. It covers areas such as planning, recruiting, managing and organising staff. It says:

- Each staff member has an important part to play in delivering child-centred, safe and effective services to children in special care units.
- The special care unit organises and manages its staff to ensure that they have the skills and experience needed to protect children and promote their welfare.
- Staff receive the support, training, and supervision they need to enable them to perform their job to the best of their ability.
- Safe recruitment practices are used for staff, and staff performance is reviewed regularly to assure the delivery of child-centred, safe and effective services to children.



## Theme 8: Use of Information

This theme describes how information is used to plan, deliver, monitor, manage and improve services in special care units for children. It says:

- All relevant information is used to plan and deliver child-centred, safe and effective services in special care units.
- All information is recorded accurately and stored securely by the special care unit.

**For further information please contact:**

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Dublin 7**

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