



**Health  
Information  
and Quality  
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis  
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

# **Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2019–2021**

***Safer Better Care***



## About the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is the independent statutory authority established to promote safety and quality in the provision of health and social care services for the benefit of the health and welfare of the public.

HIQA's mandate to date extends across a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector services. Reporting to the Minister for Health and engaging with the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, HIQA has responsibility for the following:

- **Setting standards for health and social care services** — Developing person-centred standards and guidance, based on evidence and international best practice, for health and social care services in Ireland.
- **Regulating social care services** — The Office of the Chief Inspector within HIQA is responsible for registering and inspection residential services for older people and people with a disability, and children's special care units.
- **Regulating health services** — Regulating medical exposure to ionising radiation.
- **Monitoring services** — Monitoring the safety and quality of health services and children's social services, and investigating as necessary serious concerns about the health and welfare of people who use these services.
- **Health technology assessment** — Evaluating the clinical and cost-effectiveness of health programmes, policies, medicines, medical equipment, diagnostic and surgical techniques, health promotion and protection activities, and providing advice to enable the best use of resources and the best outcomes for people who use our health service.
- **Health information** — Advising on the efficient and secure collection and sharing of health information, setting standards, evaluating information resources and publishing information on the delivery and performance of Ireland's health and social care services.
- **National Care Experience Programme** — Carrying out national service-user experience surveys across a range of health services, in conjunction with the Department of Health and the HSE.



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## Introduction

HIQA was established in 2007 to drive improvements in Ireland's health and social care sectors. The focus of all of our work is to make services safer and better, and to provide independent advice to support sound decisions on how these services are delivered.

Within HIQA we also strive for improvement, and continually seek to be more efficient and effective in everything that we do. This is particularly true of our communications function; a role which is central to achieving our strategic objectives.

The Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2019–2021 sets out HIQA's communications objectives for the next three years. It supports the organisation's Corporate Plan 2019–2021 and annual business plans, and provides a framework for us to achieve our goals by ensuring that our stakeholders are not only aware of what we do, but are also facilitated to engage with us and contribute to our work.

This strategy reflects the priorities of HIQA's Board. It is informed by HIQA's mission, vision and values, our communications and stakeholder engagement principles, and an assessment of our current performance. It also reflects the expertise and experience of our staff, valuable and relevant input from our external stakeholders, and best practice in public sector communications.

The strategy aims to build on our key communications achievements since HIQA's establishment in 2007, with particular regard for our accomplishments over the past two-and-a-half years, as highlighted in the infographic on pages 8–9.

During the development of this document we also considered the barriers to effective stakeholder engagement, which range from the complexity of some of our subject matter areas, the diverse nature of our stakeholder groups, changes to the modern media landscape, and extenuating environmental factors, such as political and legislative changes.

In terms of internal communication, we looked at the challenges posed by a growing workforce spread across multiple locations, while on the subsequent page, we outline how we will communicate with our external stakeholders. All of the challenges to effective communication and stakeholder engagement were carefully considered in the preparation of this strategy and in the selection of our five core communications objectives.

HIQA has a broad and expanding remit, reflected in our increasing number of internal and external stakeholders. Appendix 1 lists HIQA's main stakeholder groups

and provides some examples of members of these groups. It is not a definitive list and serves only to give an impression of who our core stakeholders are.

HIQA is committed to communicating in an open, inclusive and timely manner with all of our stakeholders. Clear communication with stakeholders is the responsibility of all HIQA staff members, who will be supported to do so by the Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Team.



# HIQA's communications achievements 2016 - 2018

**84** press releases



**145** responses to internal communications survey



**16** HIQA News editions

**30** issues of internal e-zine

**60** infographics



**2,795** inspection reports

**159** publication statements

in 2016 and 2017

Launch of National Patient Experience Survey



Winner of **Best Healthcare Campaign** at the PRII Awards for Excellence in Public Relations 2018

**9** Supporting Oireachtas committee appearances

**65** PQs  
**139** FOIs

**SMS** service



# HIQA's communications achievements 2016 - 2018

**12** submissions to public consultations

**18** public consultations conducted

**30** YouTube videos (incl. 5 animations)

Commencement of **Intranet** redevelopment



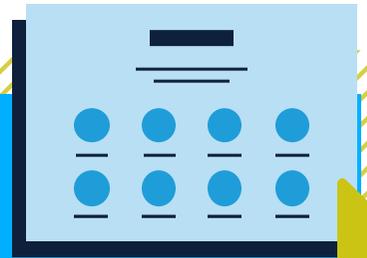
## HIQA 10

Series of events in 2017 to mark 10 years of HIQA, incl. Red C opinion poll

Launch of the new [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie) website

**3m** page views

**435,242** users



**58.9%**

increase in likes



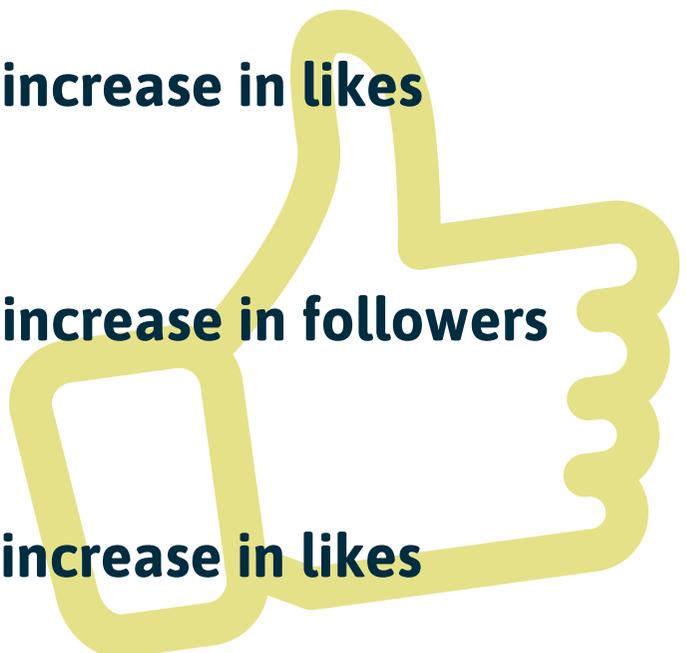
**133%**

increase in followers



**237%**

increase in likes



## HIQA’s mission, vision and values

### Mission statement:

Working to improve health and social care services for people in Ireland.

### Our vision



### Values

HIQA is driven by its values, which reflect the essence of the legislation that defines our remit. They were developed by our Board and staff following consultation with external stakeholders. This communications strategy is underpinned by these values, set out below.

HIQA’s values:	In practice, this means we will:
<b>PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST</b>	put the needs, voices, rights and protection of people who use health and social care services at the centre of our work.
<b>BEING FAIR AND OBJECTIVE</b>	be fair and objective in our dealings with people and organisations.
<b>BEING OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE</b>	communicate the nature and outcomes of our work and accept full responsibility for our actions.
<b>STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE</b>	continually improve the quality of our work and use the best available evidence.
<b>WORKING TOGETHER</b>	listen to and work with those funding, planning, providing and using health and social care services.

## HIQA's communications and stakeholder engagement principles

### Our communication aspires to be:

- **timely and responsive.** In practice this means:
  - ensuring that we share pertinent information with our stakeholders as soon as possible
  - engaging early with stakeholders to gain their support for HIQA's work and feedback on it
  - actively listening to stakeholders and taking on board their views.
- **transparent, ethical, fair and objective.** In practice this means:
  - clearly communicating the aim and scope of HIQA's work and how and why decisions are made
  - providing stakeholders with as much relevant and appropriate information as possible
  - ensuring that HIQA is fair and balanced in its communications.
- **accessible.** In practice this means:
  - understanding who HIQA's stakeholders are and adapting methods of communication to ensure that HIQA's message is understood
  - using plain English and quality assuring all publications in line with HIQA's publications policy
  - adopting a wide range of channels, tools and methods to effectively communicate with a broad range of stakeholders.
- **inclusive.** In practice this means:
  - seeking to engage with all interested parties in a consistent manner
  - remaining impartial and objective in all of HIQA's dealings with stakeholders
  - providing as many consultation and engagement opportunities as possible to encourage participation from a wide variety of stakeholders.
- **proportionate.** In practice this means:
  - undertaking communications activities that are appropriate for the specific purpose and circumstances
  - ensuring that HIQA provides value for money at all times, while using its resources to make a real difference.

## HIQA's communications objectives and themes for 2019–2021

To deliver HIQA's strategic goals over the next three years, we have identified five key communications objectives:

- **Maintain confidence and trust in HIQA** and underscore the quality, independence and integrity of our work.
- **Promote public awareness and understanding** of the role, remit and different functions of HIQA.
- **Work in collaboration with our stakeholders**, and act on their feedback.
- **Clearly and effectively communicate** HIQA's work through plain English and via a wide range of communications channels and tools.
- **Build on our communications capability** by exploring new ways of engaging with our stakeholders and by promoting a 'digital first' approach.

Each of these objectives is aligned to the communication and engagement principles that guide HIQA's engagement activities. These principles, listed on the previous page, set the standards to which HIQA aspires in building open, respectful and inclusive working relationships. Our objectives also reflect our values and support HIQA's overall purpose, which is to work collaboratively to improve the quality and safety of health and social care services in Ireland.

In addition to these five communications objectives, we will focus on a number of central themes over the period of this strategy, to include:

- **HIQA's role in public protection**, including the safeguarding of children and adults who may be vulnerable and driving improvements in safety and quality.
- **the need for a sound evidence base** to inform health policy and health service decisions.
- **the importance of supporting the implementation of national standards** to bring about better outcomes for service users.
- **the importance of listening to the voice of the public** and the experiences of people using services, and of encouraging an appropriate response from the health and social care sectors.

The actions to give effect to this communications strategy will be set out in comprehensive annual action plans, aligned to HIQA's Corporate Plan 2019–2021 and annual business plans.

## Communicating with our internal stakeholders

HIQA values its staff as its most essential asset. We strongly believe that good communication contributes to a positive working environment, boosts staff morale and productivity, and fosters a feeling of inclusiveness. Effective communication is vital to a highly-functioning organisation like HIQA, which has a broad and growing remit and a diverse workforce spread across multiple locations.

HIQA is committed to cultivating a two-way dialogue between staff and management. Staff need to develop an understanding of HIQA's mission, values and objectives, and the role they play in achieving our aims. In addition, for staff to feel engaged in their workplace, they need an organisation which listens to their views and acts on staff feedback.

In order to foster effective, constructive and open communication with staff, we will focus on three of HIQA's strategic communications objectives for the period 2019–2021, as follows:

### Work in collaboration with our staff

We will provide staff with opportunities to exert influence within the organisation and to communicate upwards to the Board and the Executive Management Team (EMT). HIQA is committed to engaging with staff and will measure staff satisfaction using an employee survey on a regular basis. Furthermore, internal consultations will be held to ascertain the opinions of our staff on key issues. The findings of consultations will be shared with staff, reviewed by senior management and will inform the development of new and revised work practices.

### Clearly and effectively communicate

An internal communications framework will be developed to ensure that information is made available to all staff, regardless of where they work, in a consistent and regular fashion. As the number of staff working from home increases, this will become increasingly important.

Staff will be made aware of corporate information such as HIQA's vision and strategy, risk-management processes and corporate reporting. Staff will also be kept abreast of key decisions made at Board level, and any planned changes in the workplace and in the wider environment, including changes to our legislative responsibilities.

### Build on our communications capability

In acknowledgement of the fact that our staff have different communication preferences and are located across the organisation, we will explore the use of a

wide range of technologies and tools to enhance the way we communicate and engage internally. We will also use the most effective technologies to communicate in a coordinated and efficient way. Staff will be provided with suitable equipment and software to enable high-quality communication and to support them to carry out their work.

Furthermore, the redevelopment of HIQA's Intranet has commenced and a new, modern and user-friendly design will be launched in 2019.

## Communicating with our external stakeholders

HIQA works in partnership with a wide range of external stakeholders to deliver our mission. In our dealings with external stakeholders over the next three years we will meet HIQA's five communications objectives, as outlined below:

### Maintain confidence and trust in HIQA

We will underpin the quality, independence and integrity of HIQA's work by being consistent, fair, timely and transparent in all of our communications. We will work to ensure that information on our work is balanced, accurate and objective; and comply with our statutory requirements, for example by engaging with Oireachtas committees, responding to all parliamentary affairs queries and promoting our customer charter.

### Promote awareness and understanding of HIQA

We will work proactively with our stakeholders to publicly promote the work of HIQA and to explain to diverse audiences what our role and remit is. We will also highlight how all of HIQA's functions contribute to improving the safety and quality of health and social care services. This will be done through media campaigns, political engagement, a new citizen forum and public consultations.

### Work in collaboration with our stakeholders

We will develop and maintain good working relationships with all of our stakeholders and actively elicit their input through public consultations, advisory and focus groups, one-to-one meetings and on inspection. We will be proactive, accessible and responsive in our dealings with stakeholders and will work collaboratively with our partners on projects of mutual interest, such as the National Patient Experience Survey, HRB-CICER and on the commencement of new regulatory functions.

### Clearly and effectively communicate

We will avail of a wide range of communications channels and tools to provide timely and accurate information on HIQA's work. We will promote the use of plain English within the organisation and build our communications capability through best-practice use of social and digital media, and the web.

### Build on our communications capability

We will explore different ways of engaging with our stakeholders, including new technologies, and expand our use of infographics, animations, video and other tools. We will also continue to develop [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie) as an accessible and user-focused resource for our stakeholders.

## Evaluation and review

This Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is aimed at supporting the overall work programme and strategic objectives of HIQA to 2021. It is a high-level document, and will be accompanied by annual action plans to guide and direct staff and management in delivering our overall goals.

The action plans, aligned to HIQA's annual business plans, will list the activities HIQA will carry out in over the next three years, and will include key performance indicators (KPI) to enable measurement of performance against set targets.

The overall implementation of this strategy and the annual action plans will be overseen by the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement. Progress against objectives will be reported to HIQA's Board subcommittees and the EMT at regular intervals in line with HIQA's corporate performance reporting framework. The implementation and impact of this strategy will be evaluated annually by the Board and EMT.

To ensure that all actions are undertaken, individual directorates will regularly review their own stakeholder objectives and priorities, update stakeholder lists and devise targeted action plans. Where there is a risk that an action may not be completed on time, this will be escalated to the Chief Executive Officer and the EMT.

Regular meetings will be held between the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, the CEO and individual directors to ensure that HIQA's messaging is in keeping with our mission, values and corporate objectives. During these meetings, high-level interactions with external stakeholders such as the media and Government officials will be discussed and coordinated.

A standing operating procedure (SOP) will be developed to outline the procedure for engaging with HIQA's stakeholders in a transparent and objective fashion. It will apply to all staff in the organisation and it will be the responsibility of the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement to ensure that this procedure is adhered to.

Taking account of the fluidity and speed of the news cycle, the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement will keep the CEO apprised of engagements with the media, and seek approval, in line with agreed policy, for official statements. Where press queries relate to specific directorates, the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement will work with the relevant directors to ensure that our communications are accurate, clear and consistent.

## Appendix 1: stakeholder groups



## Appendix 2: strategies consulted

During the development of this Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy we reviewed a sample of similar strategies published by public sector bodies, both nationally and internationally. These include:

- Department of Justice and Equality, Communications Strategy 2016–2018
- Houses of the Oireachtas, Communications Strategy 2017–2019
- Health Service Executive, Social Media Strategy 2017
- Office of Government Procurement, Communications Strategy 2018–2020
- Care Quality Commission’s (CQC) Public Engagement Strategy
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Communications Strategy and Plan 2018–2019
- NMBI media policy 2018
- Australian Department of Health, Stakeholder Engagement Framework 2015.





Published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

**For further information please contact:**

Health Information and Quality Authority  
George's Court  
George's Lane  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7  
D07 E98Y

Phone: +353 (0)1 8147400

Email: [info@hiqa.ie](mailto:info@hiqa.ie)

URL: [www.hiqa.ie](http://www.hiqa.ie)