

Brief for the scoping consultation to inform the development of Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services

Background

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is the statutory body established under the Health Act 2007 to drive high-quality and safe care for people using health and social care services in Ireland. One of HIQA's functions is to set standards for health and social care services, including children's services, and to monitor services against these standards.

HIQA recognises the importance of increasing the quality and safety of care and support for all children when they are using health and social care services provided by statutory agencies as well as by private and voluntary service providers. These services include GPs, primary care services, hospitals, child protection and welfare services, children's residential centres, services for children with disabilities, and mental health services.

These overarching national standards have the potential to improve the experience of all children using health and social care services, by promoting clarity, consistency and continuity within and between services, and to focus services on the child first, rather than on the individual service needs. These standards, written from the perspective of a child, will help health and social care services to plan for and deliver high quality child-centred services.

The development of overarching national standards also provides HIQA with an opportunity to create a framework for the development of more specific standards or guidance that describe in more detail how services can care for and support children in a particular context, if required.

Purpose of the scoping consultation

We are holding this scoping consultation to give children, young people and families with experience of these health and social care services, advocates, staff and policymakers the opportunity to identify the key areas that these overarching national standards should address, to describe how these new standards can be put in to practice, and to provide examples of good practice. We are interested in identifying people who should be consulted when developing the overarching national standards. We are also interested in your views on the key documents that

should be considered when developing the overarching standards. This includes national strategies on child health and wellbeing, and international principles on child health and wellbeing. We will carefully assess all feedback received and use it, along with other available evidence, to develop the overarching national standards.

Themes informing the Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services

A wide range of legislation, regulations and standards, policies and guidance informs the provision of children's health and social care services in Ireland. Throughout these documents, a number of key points have emerged to date. These include the importance of:

- promoting positive health and wellbeing for children and their families through community-based services
- identifying and addressing a child's needs early and assessing the effectiveness of any interventions regularly
- providing health and social care services as close to a child's home as possible to minimise the impact on the child and the family
- ensuring that children and their family are involved in planning for their care and support, in a way that suits their current and changing needs
- working in a collaborative way across services to ensure the child gets the right care, from the right services, at the right time.

These points will be reviewed and expanded on by looking at further evidence and stakeholder engagement, including through this scoping consultation. In the coming months, we will conduct a public consultation on the draft overarching national standards, which will be available for comment for a period of six weeks on our website.

Update on the development of Draft National Standards for Children's Social Services

In 2019 HIQA commenced the development of Draft National Standards for Children's Social Services, including aftercare services provided to young people with care experience, from the point of a child's referral to a service until they transfer to another service or are discharged. To date, HIQA has published an evidence review to support the development of these standards and has engaged extensively with a wide range of stakeholders, including children, families and young people with experience of these services, to ensure that the standards will meet the needs of children. Based on all of the evidence gathered to date, HIQA has developed a first draft of the standards. These standards will form a component of the Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social

Care Services and will provide more detail on how staff in these services can provide high quality, safe and consistent support for children who are at risk or in the care of the State. There will be an opportunity for members of the public, children, young people and families, as well as advocates, staff, and policymakers to give to give their feedback on the Draft National Standards for Children's Social Services in early 2021.

Further information

If you have any questions or queries, please contact us by phoning: (01) 814 7400 or emailing us at standards@hiqa.ie