



**Health  
Information  
and Quality  
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis  
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte



# Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2022-2024

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## Who we are and what we do

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 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 Chief Inspector within HIQA is responsible for registering and inspecting 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, standards setting, evaluating 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.

## Our vision and mission

### Vision

Safer services and better care for all.

### Mission

Protecting service users, and working with stakeholders to enhance and enable equity, quality and safety of health and social care services for all people in Ireland.

## Our values

### Promoting and protecting human rights

- We will work to promote human rights as well as identifying, challenging and reporting on breaches of rights in health and social care services.

### Putting people first

- We will put the voice and needs of people at the centre of our work and strive to identify, challenge and report on breaches to agreed standards.

### Being fair, objective and equitable

- We will be fair, objective and consistent in our dealing with people and organisations.

### Being open and accountable

- We will communicate the nature and outcomes of our work in an open and transparent way, accepting full responsibility for our actions.

### Striving for excellence

- We will continually innovate and improve the quality of our work through robust research, striving for methodical rigour and using the best available resources and evidence.

### Promoting quality

- We will promote quality within our own organisation and across all health and social care services.

### Working collaboratively

- We will engage and work collaboratively with all our stakeholders.

## Introduction

As an organisation, we have a very clear mission – to protect people using services, and work with stakeholders to enhance and enable equity, quality, and safety of health and social care services for all people in Ireland.

But we cannot do this on our own. To achieve this ambition, the importance of continuous engagement with our stakeholders cannot be underestimated. Together we can bring about change and can work towards safer services and better care for all.

We understand the importance of listening to our stakeholders. Stakeholder feedback helped shape our Corporate Plan 2022-2024 through an engagement programme with policy-makers, planners and providers of services, as well as service users, advocacy groups, HIQA staff and the wider public.

As we now take steps towards achieving the strategic objectives set out in that plan, we want to ensure that everyone impacted by our work is informed about what we are doing and has an opportunity to share their opinions and experiences to help inform the planning, delivery and outcome of that work.

This Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2022-2024 is aligned with the overall business objectives of the organisation and reflects feedback from both our internal and external stakeholders, as well as the priorities of our Board. It is informed by our mission, vision and values; current and past communications activity; and is guided by our communications and stakeholder engagement principles.

We have considered external factors, the challenges they may pose and potential barriers to communication and engagement that we may face. The current COVID-19 pandemic means we are currently operating in a complex environment with many uncertainties that will ultimately impact, to some degree, how we communicate and engage. Consistent, effective and engaging communications, both internally and externally, has never been more important.

Throughout the life of this strategy, we will strive to further enhance our approach to communications and engagement, and to build on the communications achievements of our previous strategy over the past three years. We will regularly review the range of stakeholder groups we have, their specific communication needs, and will look at how we engage with each group to ensure we are meeting those needs.

We aspire to communicating and engaging in an open and inclusive manner, and building strong relationships both internally and externally. In doing so are guided by our communications and stakeholder engagement principles.

# Our communications and stakeholder engagement principles

**Timely and responsive.** In practice this means:

- ensuring that all communication outputs are published 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 why and how 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 appropriately to ensure that HIQA's message is understood
- using plain English, alternative text and closed captions and other tools to ensure communication is accessible
- adopting a wide range of channels, tools and methods to reach as many stakeholders as possible.

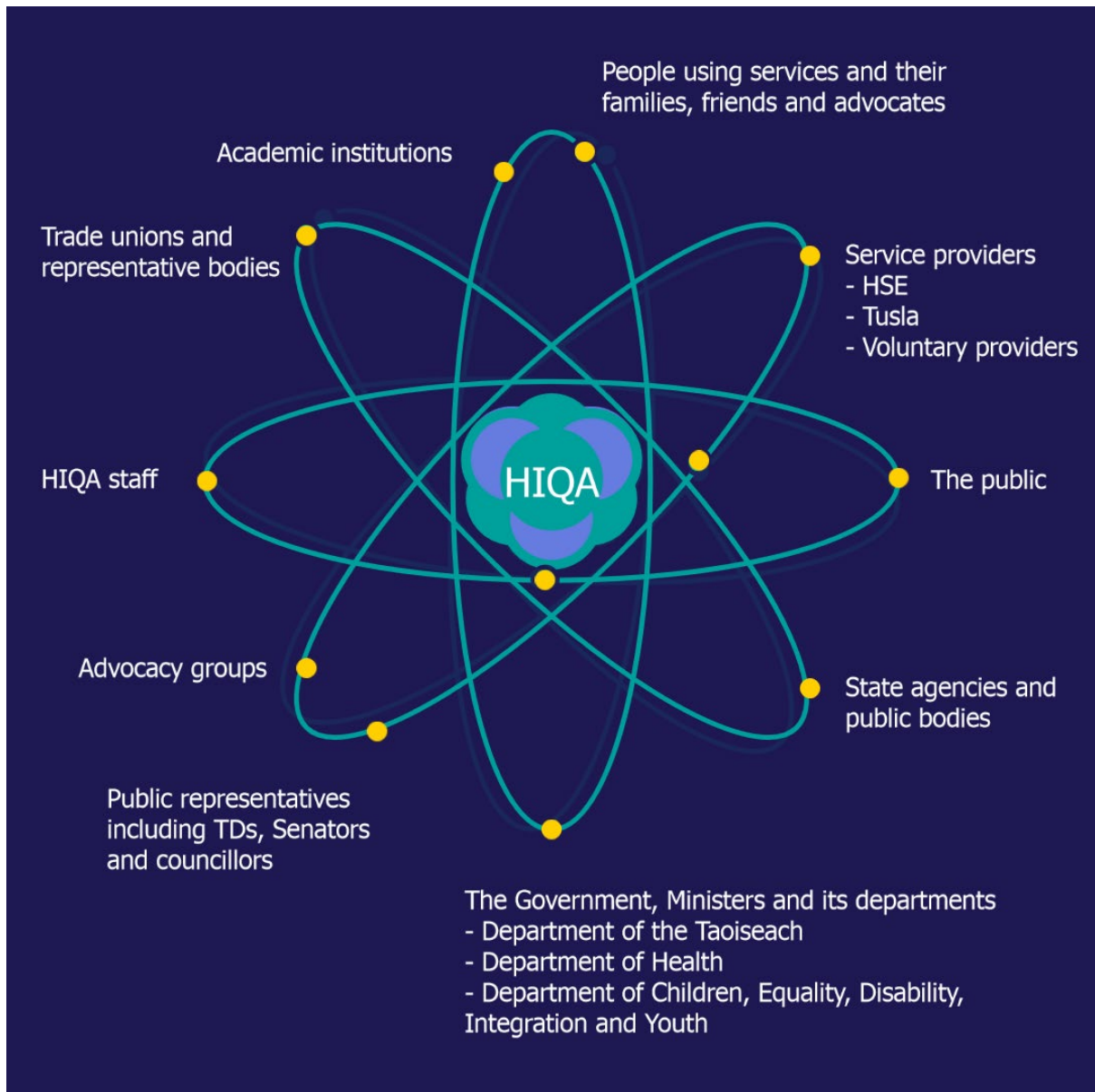
**Inclusive.** In practice this means:

- seeking to engage with all interested parties
- remaining impartial and objective in all 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 resources to make a real difference.

## Our stakeholders



## Our approach to communications and stakeholder engagement

HIQA works in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. As our remit continues to broaden and expand, so too do our stakeholder groups. We are committed to ensuring strong and effective engagement with our stakeholders, existing and new, as we work towards achieving our ambition of safer services and better care for all.

When communicating with our stakeholders we will use a number of tools and channels, including traditional, social, and digital media. We aim to ensure that we are clear on the audience we want to reach and that we utilise the most appropriate tools, channels and messaging in order to maximise engagement with them. We will continue to focus on accessibility and build on the work undertaken to date to ensure we are communicating and engaging clearly and that we are meeting the needs of our stakeholders in this regard, as well as meeting our obligations.

Activity and the performance of tools and channels will be monitored and measured, and we will take learnings from the results and adapt our approach where necessary. We are continually looking at new, innovative and engaging ways to communicate with our stakeholders with a 'digital first' approach and will continue to do so throughout the life of this strategy.

We will be proactive in our engagement, building strong relationships and working collaboratively on projects of mutual interest. Public consultations, media management, a public affairs programme, one-to-one meetings and focus groups, publications and newsletters, expert advisory groups, presentations and seminars are some of the mechanisms we will use to engage with external stakeholders.

As an organisation, HIQA strives to be an employer of choice and for staff to feel engaged, valued and fulfilled, and be supported in both their work and their development. We value our staff and the importance of internal communications in helping to achieve this. We aim to ensure that we foster a culture of inclusiveness, respect and support across the organisation. Listening to staff is equally as important as listening to our external stakeholders. We will ensure that there are mechanisms in place to facilitate two-way dialogue and for staff to provide feedback, and that actions are taken as a result of that feedback. In developing this strategy, we consulted with our staff to seek their feedback on internal communications and this strategy. In response to the survey results, we will develop a new internal communications plan. This plan will build on activity undertaken in the past three years but will consider the need for new approaches given new ways of working, the increase in staff numbers, and remote working.

To support the achievement of the strategic goals set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-2024, we have identified four communications and stakeholder engagement objectives.



## Our communications objectives 2022-2024

Our communications objectives are the bridge between HIQA's strategic objectives and a detailed set of practical tactics that will be implemented through annual action plans to help achieve us these objectives.

### Inform and influence

- Build awareness of HIQA's role and programme of work among all its stakeholders, positioning the organisation and its leaders as trusted experts, thought leaders, and key advisors and influencers of policy, highly regarded for its contribution to improving Ireland's health and social care system.
- Ensure that the information we communicate to raise awareness of HIQA's role and functions, both internally and externally, is accessible and communicated clearly and effectively through plain English and via a wide range of communications channels and tools.

### Listen and learn

- Ensure we have clear and open lines of communication to listen to the opinions and experiences of those using services, service providers, our staff, the general public and other stakeholders, and learn from and act on the feedback we receive.
- Actively seek opportunities to engage and consult with internal and external stakeholders, and collaborate and work in partnership with them.
- Strengthen existing stakeholder relationships and establish new relationships to facilitate sharing of knowledge, expertise and learnings.

### Support and enable

- Develop and promote resources, guidance and tools to support service providers and those working in health and social care settings to:
  - understand our programmes of work including Health Technology Assessment, evidence synthesis and regulation
  - understand and implement the national standards applicable to their work.
- Support people using services to share their experiences and enable them to voice their opinions to help inform our work and improve services and care provided.
- Support our staff through effective and engaging communication, enabling them to share their views and ideas, and ensuring they feel engaged and valued.

## Enhance and explore

- Enhance HIQA's digital presence and explore new ways of engaging with our stakeholders, both internal and external, promoting a 'digital first' approach.

## Implementation and evaluation

To help us achieve our goals, a detailed set of practical tactics will be set out in annual action plans. These action plans will detail the communications channels and tools that will be used to achieve our communications objectives, which in turn support the organisation's strategic objectives, as well as key performance indicators (KPIs) to enable measurement of performance against set targets.

Below is a brief outline of some of the tactics that will best support the achievement of our communications objectives. Annual action plans will provide more detail in relation to activity in each of these areas:

- stakeholder engagement
- public affairs
- media relations
- internal communications
- digital and social media
- brand management.

Channels and tools for reaching key audiences will include:

- digital and social engagement
- events, meetings and focus groups
- public consultations
- media briefings
- political briefings
- media coverage
- visual communications, such as video and infographics.

Responsibility for the implementation of this strategy lies with the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement.

The Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Team will implement the annual action plans and monitor progress and performance on an ongoing basis. The team will also undertake a mid-year review and adapt plans if necessary. Individual directorates will regularly review their own stakeholder objectives and priorities. The implementation of action plans will also be monitored by HIQA's Board, Resource Oversight Committee (ROC), and its Executive Management Team as part of corporate performance reporting arrangements.

## Appendix 1

# Review of 2019-2021 Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Activity

### HIQA's communications achievements 2019 - 2021

**132** press releases



**120**

responses to 2021  
internal communications  
survey

**18** HIQA NEWS  
editions

**36** issues of  
internal  
e-zine

**27** infographics

**4,177** inspection  
reports

**249** publication  
statements

**4** Supporting  
Oireachtais  
committee  
appearances

**70** PQs

**327** FOIs



# HIQA's communications achievements 2019 - 2021

**18** submissions to  
public consultations

**16** public  
consultations  
conducted

**Youtube** video  
views

**25,726**

## HIQA Website

**1.4 million**  
downloads



**4.2 million**  
unique page views



**+15,000**

**new followers**



**+6,000**

**new followers**



**+1,500**

**new followers**



**296**

**instagram stories**



## Health Information and Quality Authority

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