



## An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis agus Cáilíocht Sláinte



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

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 Office of 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.

# HIQA's Quality Service Action Plan 2022-24

## Purpose of Customer Charters and Customer Action Plans

The *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* requires all public service bodies to have a Customer Charter and a Customer Action Plan. A Customer Charter is a short document which acts as a public commitment to the customer on the level of service they can expect to receive when dealing with a State body. The Customer Action Plan is more detailed and describes how the customer charter commitments will be delivered and evaluated by the State body. HIQA is committed to providing a quality service to all its stakeholders and our action plan focusses on areas, aligned to the Principles of Quality Customer Service, where fresh impetus and additional improvements can be made. In HIQA, we refer to the Customer Charter as our *Quality Service Charter* and the action plan as our *Quality Service Action Plan*.

## What quality means in HIQA:

Quality means delivering our work effectively, efficiently and consistently, to an agreed standard, while delivering our statutory requirements. It means our organisation is agile in responding to stakeholder feedback and in identifying and implementing continual improvement.

## Code of conduct:

As a State body, HIQA is committed to acting in a consistent, ethical and prudent manner which aligns with our statutory responsibilities. Individual behaviour and practice can be a significant factor in the effectiveness of an organisation, its reputation and the level of confidence and trust the public has in it.

## 12 Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service

The Quality Customer Service (QCS) initiative was established in 1997 and the network was set up in 2000 and is now facilitated by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

The network has developed 12 Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service and these provide a common basis for driving quality improvements across the public service. HIQA uses each of the 12 principles to set out its commitment to QCS, and has identified key performance indicators to help benchmark our achievements each year over the three-year cycle of the quality service action plan.

Quality Service Standards	Equality/Diversity	Physical Access
Information	Timeliness and Courtesy	Complaints
Appeals	Consultation & Evaluation	Choice
Official Languages Equality	Better Co-ordination	Internal Customer

Source: [Quality Customer Service Network, Customer Action Plans and Charters]

## Corporate plan objectives 2022—2024

HIQA's corporate plan places a strong emphasis on quality and our corporate plan objectives (CPOs) and annual business plan objectives (BPOs) are referenced where appropriate in this Quality Service Action Plan.

### Key enablers for achieving HIQA's Corporate Plan Objectives

Our corporate objective 6 outlines the key enablers that support us to innovate and excel in the way HIQA carries out its work. These align to many of the principles of a quality public service and are as follows:

#### 6.1 Motivated, skilled people

*We will strive to have a culture that supports people in their work and in their development to enable them deliver personal and organisational objectives consistent with our values.*

#### 6.2 Research excellence

*We will review and enhance our structures to ensure that we have the capacity and capability for research excellence.*

#### 6.3 Responsiveness, flexibility and agility

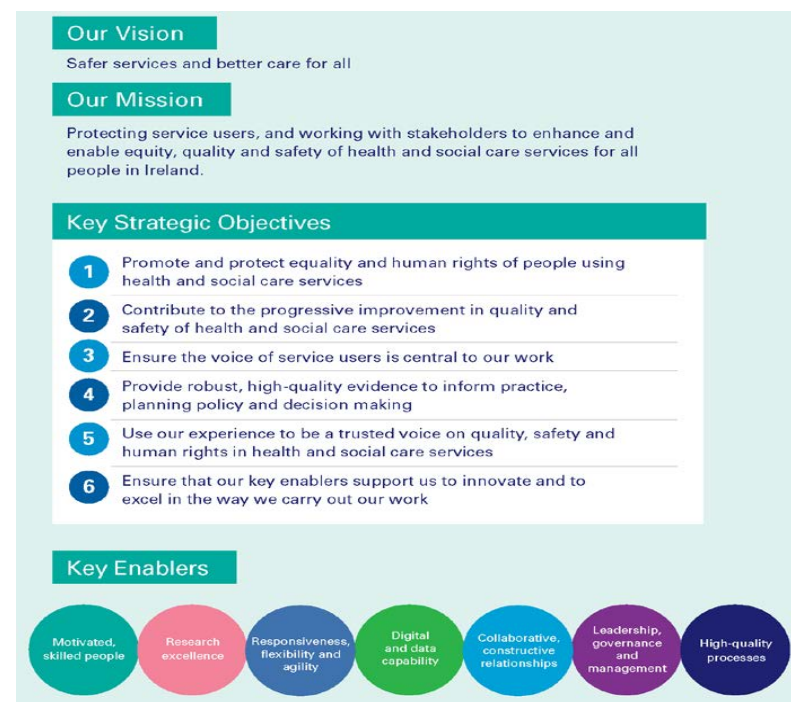
*We will maintain the ability to respond and adapt, with speed, to changes in our legislative framework and in our wider operating environment.*

#### 6.4 Digital and data capability

*We will continue to develop our digital and data capabilities using modern digital technologies combined with new ways of working in our business processes and in how we engage and interact with our stakeholders.*

#### 6.5 Collaborative, constructive relationships

*We will work with all of our stakeholders, cognisant of our distinct roles, in areas of mutual interest, to advance the quality and safety of health and social care.*



Source: [HIQA, Corporate Plan 2022-2024]

## HIQA's Quality Service Action Plan 2022

HIQA's Quality Service Action Plan 2022		
<b>Principle: Quality Service Standard</b>	<i>Publish a statement (Customer Charter) that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.</i>	
<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Key performance indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrate HIQA's commitment to quality through our Quality Customer Charter and Action Plan 2022-2024.</li> <li>▪ Set out our commitment to quality in our Quality Statement.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Publish our Quality Service Charter 2022 – 2024 on our website.</li> <li>2. Provide an update on the Quality Service Action Plan on our website annually.</li> <li>3. Display our Quality Statement in each HIQA office.</li> </ol>	

<b>Principle: Equality/Diversity</b>	<i>Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community). Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.</i>	
<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Key performance indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure our standards, guidance and inspection methodologies are underpinned by principles of equality and human rights.</li> <li>▪ Use focus groups, advisory groups and subject matter experts to contribute and advise on the development of work programmes such as national standards e.g. children's standards.</li> <li>▪ Take action and report where we find the rights of people who use services are being infringed upon or threatened.</li> <li>▪ When undertaking health technology assessments, we will conduct an ethical analysis with a focus on the rights of people.</li> <li>▪ Support a culture where the Equality Policy and Dignity and Respect in the Workplace procedure are known, understood and adhered to by all staff.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote and publicise <i>Guidance on a Human Rights-based Approach in Health and Social Care Services</i> which was developed by HIQA with Safeguarding Ireland.</li> <li>2. Provide human rights training to inspection staff.</li> <li>3. Develop a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.</li> <li>4. Work towards the government's commitment to increasing the public service employment target for persons with disabilities from a minimum of 3% to a minimum of 6% by 2024 on an incremental basis, under the <i>Comprehensive Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015 – 2024</i>).</li> <li>5. Incorporate a focus on the rights of people in published ethical analyses by HIQA.</li> <li>6. Incorporate a focus on the rights of people in our assessment and judgement framework for</li> </ol>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to build a culture and working environment that ensures HIQA employees feel engaged, valued, and fulfilled, and are equipped and supported to perform their roles to the highest standard.</li> </ul>	<p>monitoring International Protection Accommodation Services.</p> <p>7. Include representation from the target stakeholder group when developing standards.</p>	
<b>Principle: Physical Access</b>		
<i>Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.</i>		
Our commitment	Key performance indicators	What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?
<p>We will comply with requirements of the Disability Act 2005 (the Act) by ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas in our offices to which the general public have admittance are accessible to people with disabilities (section 25).</li> <li>All our offices are maintained to a high standard that comply with relevant health and safety legislation.</li> <li>Our mainstream public services are accessible to people with disabilities insofar as this is practical and appropriate (section 26).</li> <li>Information is provided in an accessible format to persons with disabilities (section 27).</li> <li>HIQA's <i>Access Officer</i> is responsible for providing and coordinating assistance and guidance to persons with disabilities accessing services. They will also act as a point of contact for people with disabilities wishing to access such services (section 26(2)).</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that any upgrades carried out on HIQA offices will take account of accessibility for all.</li> <li>HIQA will review the Code of Practice on accessibility of Public Buildings when it is published in 2023 and identify what additional actions can be taken.</li> <li>Provide clean, accessible office space that affords privacy to staff and visitors and complies with occupational and safety standards.</li> <li>Promote information on how to contact the <i>Access Officer</i> in a prominent place on our website.</li> <li>Update HIQA's <i>Safety Statement</i> in the context of new ways of working and ensure effective Health and Safety arrangements are in place.</li> </ol>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible, goods or services purchased by HIQA are accessible to persons with disabilities (section 27).</li> </ul>		
<b>Principle: Information</b>	<i>Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication. Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures</i>	
Our commitment	Key Performance Indicators	What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a “digital enablement” approach to how we conduct business and implement online solutions and technologies to innovate in how we work and engage.</li> <li>Provide innovative digital and data solutions to significantly improve efficiency by eliminating paper-based interactions.</li> <li>Ensure that information imparted by HIQA is provided in accessible formats by using the guidance in the Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service - A Universal Design Approach.</li> <li>Provide a variety of formats so information can be widely accessed by a diverse population while being mindful that not everyone uses technology and may prefer paper documents.</li> </ul>	<p>We will avail of information technology by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating better ways of working (collaboration solution) by Q4 2022.</li> <li>Working with stakeholders to deliver digital solutions for regulation by Q1 2023.</li> <li>Using information (business intelligence) to better inform our work.</li> </ol> <p>We will facilitate public understanding of information by adhering to best practice on the provision of information by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring our website continues to meet Level AA Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).</li> </ol>	



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Providing details of FOI requests received by HIQA in our Annual Reports and on our website.</li> <li>3. Supporting our staff by providing guidance and training on communicating in plain English.</li> <li>4. Using infographics and plain English summaries to communicate detailed and complex information.</li> <li>5. Providing information in hard copy format where appropriate.</li> <li>6. Adhering to our public duty as per the Irish Sign Language Act 2017, as appropriate.</li> <li>7. Public consultations will be conducted through a range of different mechanisms to reach maximum audience.</li> <li>8. Meeting our stated response times to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifications</li> <li>• Registrations</li> <li>• Receipt of unsolicited information</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Parliamentary Questions</li> <li>• Freedom of Information requests.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
<b>Principle: Timeliness and Courtesy</b>	<i>Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer. Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing communications.</i>	
<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Key performance indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>

<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In line with our values, provide a quality service to all our stakeholders and interact with people in a clear, polite, accessible, professional manner.</li> <li>▪ Deal with your query as quickly as possible - if your query is unusual or raises complex issues, we may arrange a call back at a time convenient for you or we may ask you to write to us. This is so that we can give you the most appropriate answer possible.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All emails to info@hiqa.ie will be acknowledged and sent to the relevant business area for a reply.</li> <li>2. Provide customer service training to relevant staff.</li> <li>3. Create awareness of revised Code of Conduct and in particular, awareness of the Standards of Professional conduct and practice for authorised persons.</li> <li>4. Provide information on the number and type of unsolicited and solicited information received by HIQA in our annual report.</li> </ol>	
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<b>Principle: Complaints</b>		<i>Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.</i>
<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Key performance indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We regard feedback as opportunities to review practice, procedures and identify areas for improvement.</li> <li>▪ Provide information booklets on our website to guide people on how to make a complaint about a health or social care service.</li> <li>▪ Regularly review our complaints process and make improvements based on feedback.</li> <li>▪ Ensure clear accessible communications channels that allow service users and other stakeholders to share their views, concerns and feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide the information on how to make a complaint and the <i>Policy for the Management of Complaints about HIQA</i> in a prominent area on our website.</li> <li>2. Meet the timelines as set out in our complaints policy for managing complaints.</li> <li>3. Provide an overview on the number of complaints received in our annual report.</li> <li>4. Provide feedback on the quality improvement initiatives put in place following review of complaints.</li> </ol>	
<b>Principle: Appeals</b>		<i>Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.</i>
<b>Our Commitment</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
<p>We will:</p>	<p>We will:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to underpinning the design, development and review of our work by processes that ensure quality and consistency.</li> <li>Treat feedback and complaints as opportunities to review practice, procedures and identify areas for improvement.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information on how to make an appeal in a prominent place on our website.</li> <li>Meet the timelines for our appeals process as set out in our policies in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints</li> <li>Freedom of Information</li> <li>Recruitment</li> <li>Data access.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
<b>Principle: Consultation and Evaluation</b>	<i>Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.</i>	
<b>Our Commitment</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to facilitating and supporting stakeholders to express their views and provide valuable input and feedback.</li> <li>Speak with service users during the course of regulatory work in health and social care services and include their opinions and experiences when designing regulatory programmes and standards.</li> <li>Seek feedback and take appropriate account of it in our planning and decision making.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an annual stakeholder engagement plan for social services.</li> <li>Provide information in our annual report and overview reports on how we interact with service users and used the information they provided us with to drive improvement in health and social care services.</li> <li>Hold provider representative forum meetings and run roadshow events with providers and persons in charge, where applicable.</li> </ol>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure clear accessible communications channels that allow service users and other stakeholders to share their views, concerns and feedback.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate consultations routinely into key projects to inform our work, where appropriate.</li> <li>Publish reports on the impact of our work in Health Technology Assessment and Health Information and Standards.</li> <li>Use focus groups, advisory groups and subject matter experts to contribute and advise on the development of work programmes.</li> <li>Publish stakeholder involvement reports.</li> </ol>	
<b>Principle: Choice</b>	<i>Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.</i>	
Our Commitment	Key Performance Indicators	What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through our Digital and Data Transformation Strategy take a “digital first” approach to how we conduct our business, implement online solutions and technologies to innovate how we work and engage.</li> <li>Aim to ensure that our communications are channelled through a variety of platforms so they can be widely accessed by a diverse population while being mindful that not everyone uses technology.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operate a Provider’s Portal that allows online submissions of regulatory notification information from designated centres.</li> <li>Provide a dedicated phone support service for users of the portal, five days a week during business hours.</li> <li>Work to ensure that over the lifetime of this charter, through the implementation of HIQA’s digital and data strategy, that provision will be made to enable the submission of regulatory notifications via a provider portal for all services that HIQA monitors and regulates.</li> </ol>	

	4. Hard copies of documents will be made available when sought.	
<b>Principle: Official Languages Equality</b>	<i>Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be communicated with in one or other of the official languages.</i>	
<b>Our Commitment</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strive to provide a higher standard of customer service through Irish to fulfil our obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003.</li> <li>Do all that is reasonable to ensure that interpretation into Irish Sign Language is provided for a person who is competent in that language and seeks to avail of/or access to statutory entitlements or services provided by/or under statute by that public body as per the Irish Sign Language Act 2017.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage staff members to complete the Certificate in Professional Irish.</li> <li>Publish our Annual Report in Irish.</li> <li>Post on social media in Irish.</li> </ol>	
<b>Principle: Better Co-ordination</b>	<i>Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.</i>	
<b>Our Commitment</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
We will:	We will:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore opportunities to consolidate and expand collaborations with national and international partners, including EU organisations, to enhance the continued quality and efficiency of our work.</li> <li>▪ Share relevant business intelligence, as appropriate with providers, people using services, policy-makers and the general public.</li> <li>▪ Expand and consolidate the capacity to conduct and use evidence synthesis and knowledge generation both in HIQA and across the health system.</li> <li>▪ Work with decision-makers to promote opportunities to embed the use of high-quality evidence synthesis outputs to inform key practice, planning and policy decisions.</li> <li>▪ Communicate widely our experience and learnings from the regulation of health and social care services.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work collaboratively with other public, private and voluntary bodies in developing standards, guidance, patient experience surveys and informing policy.</li> <li>2. Establish and maintain where appropriate Joint Working Arrangements to ensure cooperation with our external partners' work effectively through maintaining Memorandums of Understanding.</li> <li>3. Identify and participate in international fora/collaborations to develop links and share knowledge with international counterparts.</li> <li>4. Submit academic papers on our work to international journals.</li> <li>5. Submit abstracts for presentation at international conferences or seminars.</li> <li>6. Publish reports on evidence synthesis and stakeholder involvement and disseminate to international counterparts.</li> </ol>	
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<b>Principle: Internal Customer</b>		<i>Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.</i>
<b>Our Commitment</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>What we achieved in year 1 of Action Plan (2022)?</b>
<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the organisational structure, and the skills, competencies and behaviours of our people are true to our values and enable optimal delivery of our work.</li> <li>Develop and support leadership to manage change and enable sustainable growth of the organisation.</li> <li>Continue to build a culture and working environment that ensures HIQA employees feel engaged, valued, and fulfilled, and are equipped and supported to perform their roles to the highest standard.</li> </ul>	<p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver a Wellbeing Programme for staff.</li> <li>2. Develop and implement an Internal Communications Plan.</li> <li>3. Continue to conduct regular staff surveys and communicate the actions taken to address the findings.</li> <li>4. Use the Staff Suggestion Box to drive improvements.</li> <li>5. Our Community of Practice for Quality will support staff to drive improvements within teams.</li> <li>6. Provide Quality improvement training for staff.</li> <li>7. We will address staff training needs through our Performance Management and Development System and competency framework.</li> </ol>	





**Health  
Information  
and Quality  
Authority**

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agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

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