

## Briefing document

### Public consultation on amendment to scope of the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare

#### Introduction

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 many functions is to set person-centred standards for health and social care services provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) or service providers. HIQA also has a statutory function to monitor compliance with these standards.

#### Amending the scope of the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare* (2012)

The *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare* were approved by the Minister in 2012 and contain 45 standards. The scope of these standards includes all healthcare services (excluding mental health) provided or funded by the HSE. These standards provide a framework for healthcare providers for the continual development of person-centred, safe and effective healthcare services. The standards were developed through extensive stakeholder engagement and review of research evidence. These standards have been used by HIQA since 2012 to inspect, monitor and investigate healthcare services.

The Patient Safety (Notifiable Incidents and Open Disclosure) Act 2023 (the Patient Safety Act), which is due to commence later this year, expands HIQA's standard-setting and monitoring functions to new services, such as private hospitals. Therefore, the scope of the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare*, which HIQA inspects against, need to be amended to include private hospitals. This amendment will ensure that consistent, quality care is provided to all patients in both public and private healthcare services.

The long-term plan is to complete a full update of the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare*. This will include a literature review and further consultation and engagement including advisory group, focus groups and public consultation.

In advance of commencement of the Patient Safety Act 2023 and related expansion of HIQA's monitoring remit in private hospitals, HIQA will update existing guidance in the context of private hospitals. This will include details about HIQA's approach to monitoring and an understanding of healthcare inspections against the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare*.

## **How to contribute to the public consultation on the amendment to the scope of the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare***

In preparation for the commencement of the Patient Safety Act, HIQA is now undertaking a six-week public consultation on the amendment to the scope of the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare*. It is HIQA's intention to monitor private hospitals against these standards. The aim of the public consultation is to offer service providers and members of the public the opportunity to share their views on amending the scope of the standards to include private hospitals.

We welcome your feedback on or before **5pm on Friday 12 April 2024**. The consultation feedback form is available [online](#) or in PDF format.

The fastest way to provide your feedback is to complete the online questionnaire, which can be accessed [here](#). Your comments can also be submitted by downloading and completing the consultation form, which can be accessed [here](#), and then emailing your completed form to us at [standards@hiqa.ie](mailto:standards@hiqa.ie)

Alternatively you can fill out and post the completed form to us at:

Health Information and Quality Authority  
Amendment to Scope of National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare  
Dublin Regional Office  
George's Court, George's Lane  
Smithfield, Dublin 7  
D07 E98Y

If you require any further information please contact us by email at [standards@hiqa.ie](mailto:standards@hiqa.ie)

We will carefully assess all feedback received and use it, along with other available evidence, to inform the amendment to the scope of the *National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare*.