



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Quality Service Charter and Action Plan 2026 - 2028

Contents

About the Health Information and Quality Authority	3
Vision, Mission and Values	4
What is a Quality Service Charter and Action Plan?.....	5
Twelve Principles of Quality Service.....	5
HIQA's Quality Service Charter and Action Plan	5
Principle 1: Quality Service Standard	11
Principle 2: Equality / Diversity	12
Principle 3: Physical Access.....	14
Principle 4: Information	15
Principle 5: Timeliness and Courtesy.....	16
Principle 6: Complaints.....	17
Principle 7: Appeals	18
Principle 8: Consultation and Evaluation	19
Principle 9: Choice	20
Principle 10: Official Languages Equality	21
Principle 11: Better Coordination	22
Principle 12: Internal Customer.....	23

About the Health Information and Quality Authority

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent statutory body 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.

Reporting to the Minister for Health and engaging with relevant government Ministers and departments, 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 of Social Services 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 permanent international protection accommodation service centres, health services and children's social services against the national standards. Where necessary, HIQA investigates serious concerns about the health and welfare of people who use health services and children's social 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 and social care services, with the Department of Health and the HSE.

Visit www.hiqa.ie for more information.

Vision, Mission and Values

HIQA's Corporate Plan 2025-2027 establishes our **Vision** and **Mission**. Our Vision sets out what we ultimately want to achieve, while our Mission defines our purpose and how we will go about achieving it.



HIQA's Values guide the organisation, embodying its identity and principles. They shape how we do our business and how we engage with all internal and external stakeholders.



What is a Quality Service Charter and Action Plan?

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.¹ HIQA's Quality Service Charter outlines our public commitment to our service users regarding the level of service they can expect to receive when dealing with us. The Customer Action Plan describes our Customer Charter commitments and how they will be achieved.

Twelve Principles of Quality Service

The Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation developed Twelve Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service. These provide a common basis for driving quality improvements across the public service. HIQA's Quality Service Charter and Action Plan are based on these Twelve Principles.

Figure 1: Twelve Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service

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

HIQA's Quality Service Charter and Action Plan

This document sets out the following under each of the twelve principles:

- **Our commitments** to internal and external stakeholders and staff.
- **Our achievements** outline the key outcomes we will deliver on by the end of 2028 to continue the enhancement of our service standards. These achievements will be highlighted in HIQA's annual reports and other corporate publications available on www.hiqa.ie.

¹ In HIQA, we refer to the Customer Charter as our Quality Service Charter and the Action Plan as our Quality Service Action Plan.

Quality Service Charter 2026 - 2028

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent statutory body 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.

What quality means in HIQA

HIQA aims to promote our organisational values, and successfully deliver on our role in relation to the promotion of safety and quality in the provision of health and social care services in Ireland. In doing so we are complying with our obligations under the Health Act 2007, as amended, and other relevant requirements which govern or relate to what we do. HIQA aims to enhance communication and trust with our stakeholders, and continually improve our ways of working. We welcome opportunities to review practice, procedures and identify areas for improvement.

Our commitment to our stakeholders

We are committed to providing a quality service to all our stakeholders. Our Quality Service Action Plan focuses on areas aligned to the Twelve Principles of Quality Service², and explores where additional improvements can be made.

In line with HIQA's Mission, Vision and Values, we will be prompt and responsive to the needs of all our stakeholders, while promoting the highest standards of professionalism, respecting individual rights, diversity and equality. You can contact us through the channels outlined below.

Our stakeholders

Our staff support the effective delivery of services to our stakeholders, including the people who use services, their families and friends, the service providers and other stakeholders involved in policy development such as government departments, public representatives, representative bodies, state agencies, international organisations, academic institutions, advocacy groups and the general public.

Our Contact Details:

Our Dublin and Cork offices are open to the public, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. Our phone lines are also open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Dublin Office:

(01) 814 7400
George's Court,
George's Lane,
Smithfield,

Cork Office:

(021) 240 9300
Unit 1301,
City Gate,
Mahon,

² Guidelines for preparation of Customer Action Plans and Charters Quality Customer Service Network, prepared by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Dublin 7,
D07 E98Y

Cork,
T12 Y2XT

General Enquiries:

Website: www.hiqa.ie/

Email: info@hiqa.ie

Concerns or positive feedback about care or support in a health or social care service

Phone: 021 240 9646

Email: concerns@hiqa.ie

Protected Disclosures

01 814 7635

protecteddisclosures@hiqa.ie

Other contacts and useful email

Addresses:

Accessibility: www.hiqa.ie/accessibility

Complaints about HIQA:

complaints@hiqa.ie

Freedom of Information requests:

foi@hiqa.ie

Data Protection Officer: dpo@hiqa.ie

We will acknowledge receipt of your email and respond to your queries as soon as possible.

Where your query or complaint is outside of our remit, where possible we will direct you to the most appropriate organisation that can help you.

Social Media: HIQA uses a range of social media platforms to share important information and updates. You can find more and follow us on:



hiqaireland



hiqaireland



hiqa.bsky.social



hiqaireland



HIQA - Health
Information and
Quality Authority



HIQA

Engaging with HIQA

We are committed to engaging with people in a way that meets their needs. This includes creating accessible formats of key reports or providing information in various formats or languages for people using services.

Irish language: HIQA endeavours to provide responses in Irish to any written communication received in Irish from the general public.³ This aims to ensure better

³ This does not include regulatory engagement with registered providers.

availability and a high standard of public services through Irish, in line with HIQA's responsibilities under the Official Languages Acts 2003 and 2021.

An Gaeilge: Cuirfidh HIQA freagraí ar fáil i nGaeilge ar aon chumarsáid scríofa a fhaightear i nGaeilge⁴. Tá sé mar aidhm leis seo a chinntiú go mbeidh seirbhísí poiblí ar fáil níos fearr trí Gaeilge agus go mbeidh ardchaighdeán ar fáil dóibh, i gcomhréir le freagrachtaí HIQA faoi Achtanna na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 agus 2021.

Irish Sign Language (ISL): HIQA promotes and continues to improve access to ISL to enhance the accessibility of our work and engagement with stakeholders, where practical.

Help us to help you: To ensure efficiency in meeting your queries or comments, it would be helpful if you could adhere to the following guidance:

- Let us know if you have any special requirements or need assistance in accessing our services, information about our work or our offices. For more information about accessibility, see the contact details section above.
- Liaise directly, where possible, with the staff member or relevant business unit that you have been dealing with.
- HIQA staff will treat stakeholders with respect and courtesy and it is our expectations the we will receive the same from our stakeholders. We will not accept abusive, threatening or offensive behaviour for any reason and will take the appropriate steps to protect our staff if this occurs. HIQA has a procedure for responding when stakeholder behaviour does not meet expectations.

⁴ Ní chuimsíonn sé seo rannpháirtíocht rialála le soláthraithe cláraithe.

Quality Service Action Plan 2026 – 2028

Principle 1: Quality Service Standard



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.

Our Commitment

HIQA is committed to the development of a Quality Service Charter and Action Plan for the purpose of providing information to people engaging with our services about the level of service they can expect from us. The Charter will set out HIQA's commitment to engaging with stakeholders in line with the Twelve Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Published our Quality Service Charter and Action Plan 2026-2028 on our website (www.hiqa.ie).
- Published and displayed a Quality Service Charter Statement in each of our offices.

Principle 2: Equality/Diversity



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^[5]. 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.

Our Commitment

HIQA is committed to ensuring that groups covered by the equality legislation, as well as those socially excluded due to socio-economic and geographical factors are treated equally. We will ensure that a culture of diversity and inclusion is promoted to people using our services and the general public.

We will continually identify opportunities for improvement and align our strategic priorities to promote human rights, equality and the integrity of health and social care services in Ireland. Our Corporate Plan covers the period 2025-2027 and during this time frame HIQA will continually strive to improve equality and diversity through the promotion of human rights in health and social care services in Ireland.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Continued to meet our obligations under the Irish Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.
- Continued to promote a human rights-based approach in health and social care services through the development of national standards and guidance and monitoring of these services.
- Actively engaged with stakeholders to gather quantitative and qualitative data through the National Care Experience Programme surveys, service users' forums, focus groups and observations to ensure the experiences of people using services inform practices and continually improve our processes.
- Continued to improve our practices by embedding diverse perspectives into our decision-making processes, enhancing our ability to delivery equitable outcomes.
- Reported on the number of staff working in health and social care services that have completed the eLearning courses on applying a human rights-based approach. This course is available on the HSE LanD and [HIQA's Learning Hub](#).
- Continued to ensure our internal policies and procedures considered human rights and equality standards.

⁵ Under the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

- Ensured that a nominated Access Officer is available to facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs. Details and more information is available on our website: [Accessibility | HIQA](#).
- Undertaken an annual assessment of equality and human rights issues relevant to the organisation and set out actions to address these in HIQA's Corporate Plan 2025 – 2027.
- Continued to be an equal opportunities employer and published a Gender Pay Gap Report annually on our website.

Principle 3: Physical Access



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.

Our Commitment

We are committed to ensuring that we comply with the requirements of the Disability Act 2005 that our offices are clean, accessible and offer privacy to HIQA staff and visitors.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Ensured our offices in Cork, Dublin and Galway are clean and offer privacy to HIQA staff and visitors.
- Ensured that a nominated Access Officer is available to facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs. Details and more information is available on our website: [Accessibility | HIQA](#).
- Considered accessibility in the evaluation and planning of all events hosted by HIQA outside of our offices.
- Displayed a safety statement prominently in each office.

Principle 4: Information



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.

Our Commitment

HIQA is committed to providing clear, timely and accurate information through all points of contact that meets the needs of people. HIQA also works to promote accessibility of its information through the provision of information in plain English easy-to-read formats, where appropriate, and meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Continued to develop and publish guides and support materials in conjunction with stakeholders, ensuring their views and needs were considered. This may include materials developed in plain English, easy-to-read formats, Irish Sign Language (ISL) or various languages and formats as required to meet people's needs.
- Applied plain English principles in publications.
- Made improvements to our website to ensure we maintain and or achieve Level AA Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Printed and disseminated a range of key documents, such as national standards, guidance documents and annual and overview reports. Printed copies will also have been disseminated, where appropriate, at stakeholder engagement events and to parties who request them from HIQA.
- Provided timely responses in line with our organisational processes when communicating with stakeholders.
- Published a series of resources for residents of health and social care services to communicate with them effectively about our role.
- Ensured that engagement and survey tools developed as part of the National Care Experience Programme meet the language and accessibility needs of people using health and social care services.
- Met the targets set out in our Digital and Data Transformation Strategy, as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2025 – 2027.

Principle 5: Timeliness and Courtesy



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.

Our Commitment

We are committed to providing a quality service to all our stakeholders and interacting with people in a clear, polite, accessible, professional manner. We deal with queries as quickly as possible but we may arrange a call back at a time convenient for you, or we may ask you to write to us with more detail if needed. This is to ensure we can give you the most appropriate answer possible.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Continued to deliver our services efficiently with courtesy and respect and ensure telephone calls, emails and letters are answered promptly.
- Ensured all communication issued by HIQA has a contact name in correspondence.⁶
- Developed an organisational process around acknowledgements and response timelines.
- Published data on solicited information and notifications received about health and social care services annually.⁷
- Published data on unsolicited information received about health and social care services annually.⁸

⁶ This does not include system-generated correspondence.

⁷ Solicited information refers to specific notifications that providers are required to submit to the Chief Inspector.

⁸ Unsolicited information is information that is not requested but received by the Chief Inspector from members of the public or people that use services.

Principle 6: Complaints



Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

Our Commitment

HIQA welcomes comments, suggestions and complaints about our performance and conduct in the discharge of our statutory duties and responsibilities. We are committed to providing clear, accessible communications channels that allow people using services and other stakeholders to share their views, concerns and feedback.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Published our Complaints Policy on our website and ensured that it is accessible to the public.
- Ensured our complaints information is easily accessible on our website and through phone or email, to ensure those wishing to make a complaint understand the process.
- Reviewed and responded to all complaints in line with the Complaints Policy.
- Published the number of complaints received in HIQA's annual reports.
- Reviewed and updated HIQA's Complaints Policy in line with best practice.

Principle 7: Appeals



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.

Our Commitment

HIQA is committed to maintaining a formalised, accessible and transparent system of appeal and or review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services. While we strive to ensure that internal processes are handled efficiently and used as an opportunity to identify areas for improvement, it is important to note that once an appeal progresses to external bodies or the court system, HIQA may not be able to engage further on the matter.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

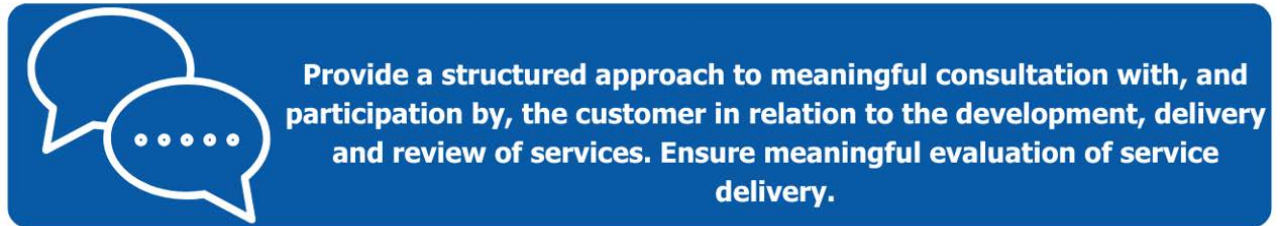
- Continued to ensure that appeals for regulatory processes and the publication of reports are performed in accordance with relevant legislation.⁹
- Ensured that our website provides accessible, transparent and simple to use information regarding relevant appeals processes, for example, regulatory decision making, Freedom of Information, and complaints.¹⁰
- Published data on the number of appeals in our annual and overview reports.
- Continued to improve our processes and procedures relating to appeals and reviews to ensure they are clear and transparent.¹¹

⁹ The Health Act 2007, as amended, and all statutory instruments made pursuant to it.

¹⁰ See Regulation Handbook: A guide for providers and staff of designated centres available at www.hiqa.ie

¹¹ This excludes regulatory processes as the appeals of decisions are set out in the Health Act 2007, as amended.

Principle 8: Consultation and Evaluation



Our Commitment

HIQA is committed to fostering open, two-way communication with all stakeholders. This includes people using services, service providers, professionals and members of the public and our staff. We actively engage with stakeholders in the course of our work, using consultation and collaboration to inform how we regulate, set standards and assess services.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Continued to engage with our stakeholders to inform HIQA's work.
- Developed and implemented a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2025-2027.
- Published how we engaged with people using services, their family members, staff, managers and other professionals during the course of inspections in our inspection reports and annual overview reports.
- Continued to consult and seek feedback from the public on draft national standards, health policy and other relevant documentation for publication on our website to ensure they meet the needs of all stakeholders.
- Continued to ensure that engagement and survey tools developed as part of the National Care Experience Programme captures the experiences of people using health and social care services.
- Continued to contribute to and consult with a number of national and international public bodies, networks, groups and workshops, which will be available to read in the HIQA's annual reports and website.
- Published clear and accessible reports detailing how stakeholder feedback influences developments in our work, including in health technology assessments, health information, national standards and guidance, and through our regulatory frameworks.

Principle 9: Choice



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.

Our Commitment

We strive to provide choices to our customers by having easily accessible information about our services and activities. These are detailed on www.hiqa.ie and in our Quality Service Charter, which includes a number of telephone, email and office contacts along with information about our social media channels.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Ensured, where possible, that calls were answered promptly and messages were responded to.
- Used automated responses to indicate receipt of email and provide alternative contact details, where required.
- Ensured correspondence received was acknowledged and responded to as necessary.
- Maintained dedicated reception staff in our Cork and Dublin offices during working hours to assist with calls and inquiries. Callers to the Galway office were accommodated with an appointment, as necessary.
- Published our Quality Service Charter on our website and reported on our commitments in HIQA's annual reports and other corporate publications for the required period.

Principle 10: Official Languages Equality



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.

Our Commitment

We are committed to respecting the language rights of the public and providing services in Irish and English, in line with our responsibilities under the Official Languages Acts 2003 and 2021. We aim to improve how we deliver our services and communicate about our work through Irish.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Responded in Irish to written communication received in Irish from the general public.¹²
- Ensured stationery, voicemails, automatic response emails and posters were bilingual.
- Ensured all external recruitment competitions were advertised in Irish and English.
- Provided information to the public in the Irish language, or in the Irish and English languages, through our website, postage, signage and social media, where required.
- Encouraged the use and learning of the Irish language among our staff by promoting events and opportunities like Seachtain na Gaeilge, ciorcal comhrá and an Ghréasán Gaeilge.
- In line with statutory requirements, published annual reports and other key documents in English and Irish simultaneously.
- Reported on compliance under the relevant parts of the Official Languages Acts to An Coimisinéir Teanga in line with the required timelines, and included a report on this compliance in HIQA's annual reports.
- Used and promoted the Irish language on our website, on posters and signage and on social media.
- Met our obligations under the Official Languages Acts 2003 and 2021 and promoted staff familiarisation with the Acts and HIQA's responsibilities under them.

¹² This does not include regulatory engagement with registered providers.

Principle 11: Better Coordination



Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

Our Commitment

HIQA is committed to continually improving its use of technology and equipment to support how we deliver our services. As our remit continues to expand with the addition of new functions, we maintain relationships with current stakeholders, while exploring opportunities to consolidate and expand formal and informal collaborations with national and international partners, including EU organisations, to enhance the continued quality and efficiency of our work.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Continued to invite people to share their experiences of care services through resident forums, in-person engagement with providers, and the National Care Experience Programme, with the aim of continuously improving the quality of health and social care services in Ireland.
- Continued to enhance our way of working with our existing external partners as well as establishing new joint working arrangements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) relevant to HIQA's remit. Existing MoUs are available on HIQA's [website](#).
- Continued to drive opportunities for cross-functional working and collaboration within HIQA, to deliver improved effectiveness and efficiencies.
- Worked collaboratively with other public, private and voluntary bodies in developing standards, guidance documents, and patient experience surveys.
- Participated in national and international groups and forums, expert advisory groups, committees and conferences, developing links and sharing knowledge with international counterparts relevant to work programmes.
- Published reports on evidence synthesis and stakeholder involvement and shared this with international counterparts.
- Submitted academic papers on our work to international journals and ensured those published in international journals were made available on www.hiqa.ie.

Principle 12: Internal Customer



Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

Our Commitment

HIQA is committed to supporting staff as internal customers by fostering a positive and inclusive workplace. We aim to ensure our organisational structure, systems and culture empower our people to effectively deliver and uphold HIQA's values in their daily work.

We promote staff wellbeing, enable continuous development and encourage open communication. By providing flexible working arrangements and maintaining effective support structures we help staff to thrive in contributing to our mission of improving health and social care in Ireland.

By the end of 2028, we will have:

- Implemented our People and Culture Strategy 2025-2027, fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture.
- Ensured that a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is implemented and has aligned with our People and Culture Strategy 2025-2027.
- Maintained our certification in Excellence Through People 1000:2017 and Quality Management Systems (QMS) ISO 9001:2015.
- Supported staff to feel engaged, valued and fulfilled, and equipped to perform their roles to the highest standard.
- Provided dignity and respect at the workplace training to all staff during their induction and regularly thereafter.
- Continued to promote our comprehensive Wellbeing Programme including an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), occupational health services, and an active wellbeing ambassador committee.
- Continued to provide training for staff in: first aid, dignity and respect in the workplace, designated contact persons for domestic violence and abuse, fire marshals, mental health first responders and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Conducted a staff engagement survey and presented findings to staff and taken actions to implement findings.

- Facilitated staff with a dedicated Intranet site signposting internal communication channels and an Employee Suggestion Box allowing staff to submit suggestions for improvement, positive feedback, concerns, queries and staff reminders.
- Continued to grow and develop the Quality Community of Practice to collaborate across teams and share learnings.
- Provided all new staff with an induction programme. Continued to provide a full range of supports to staff who work both in the office and from home under our Blended Working Model.
- Supported staff to continually develop their skills and knowledge through the Performance Management and Development System.

Published by the Health Information and Quality Authority.

For further information please contact:

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

Phone: +353 (0) 1 814 7400

Email: info@hiqa.ie

www.hiqa.ie

© Health Information and Quality Authority 2025

