



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2016-2018

Safer Better Care

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About HIQA

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent authority established to drive high quality and safe care for people using our health and social care services in Ireland. HIQA's role is to develop standards, inspect and review health and social care services and support informed decisions on how services are delivered.

HIQA aims to safeguard people and improve the safety and quality of health and social care services across its full range of functions.

HIQA's mandate to date extends across a specified range of public, private and voluntary sector services. Reporting to the Minister for Health and engaging with the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, HIQA has statutory responsibility for:

- **Setting standards for health and social services** — Developing person-centred standards, based on evidence and best international practice, for health and social care services in Ireland
- **Regulation** — Registering and inspecting designated centres
- **Monitoring children's services** — Monitoring and inspecting children's social services
- **Monitoring healthcare safety and quality** — Monitoring the safety and quality of health services and investigating as necessary serious concerns about the health and welfare of people who use these services.
- **Health technology assessment** — Providing advice that enables the best outcome for people who use our health service and the best use of resources by evaluating the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of drugs, equipment, diagnostic techniques and health promotion and protection activities
- **Health information** — Advising on the efficient and secure collection and sharing of health information, setting standards, evaluating information resources and publishing information about the delivery and performance of Ireland's health and social care service.

HIQA's mission and values

HIQA is an independent authority that exists to improve health and social care services for the people of Ireland.

Among its functions, HIQA promotes improvement in the quality and safety of health and social care services, assesses health technologies and advises on the use of health information.

HIQA's core values are to:

- **Put people first** – HIQA puts the needs and the voices of people who use health and social care services at the centre of all of its work
- **Be fair and objective** – HIQA strives to be fair and objective in its dealings with people and organisations, and undertakes its work without fear or favour
- **Be open and accountable** – HIQA shares information about the nature and outcomes of its work, and accepts full responsibility for its actions
- **Be committed to excellence** – HIQA seeks to continually improve and strives for excellence in its work
- **Work together** – HIQA engages with those funding, planning, providing and using health and social care services in developing all aspects of its work.



Introduction

Actively seeking engagement and, where relevant, involvement from the public and other interested parties has always been central to HIQA's work. It is a means to obtain views on the experience of people using health and social care services, gain wider community support, gather useful information, increase understanding and awareness of what HIQA does and provide for more sustainable, informed decision-making. HIQA is more likely to achieve its objectives, especially in the long-term, if it takes into consideration the environment in which it operates and endeavours to meet the needs of the those stakeholders with a vested interest in its work.

HIQA is committed to constructively communicating and working with its stakeholders, and as such relies on many individuals, groups and organisations to deliver on its overarching mission to improve health and social care services for the people of Ireland.

This strategy outlines the direction and scope of HIQA's engagement with stakeholders over the next three years and what HIQA aims to achieve through those relationships. It is supported by objectives and underpinned annually by an action plan, which outlines the specific activities that will be undertaken to achieve HIQA's goals. It is an overarching strategy for the entire organization and as such is owned by every member of staff, all of whom will contribute to its successful implementation. Stakeholders also have a valuable role to play in helping HIQA deliver this strategy.

As well as the principles that guide HIQA's work in communications and stakeholder engagement, HIQA is conscious of its independence and its statutory obligations as regards engagement. These include:

- the Health Act 2007
- the Disability Act 2005
- the Freedom of Information Acts 1997, 2003 and 2014
- the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

In addition, HIQA is accountable to Oireachtas Committees such as the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children and the Committee of Public Accounts, and must attend before these Committees upon request to give an account of its activities.

Where HIQA is now

The development of this strategy also coincides with the beginning of a new corporate plan, HIQA's fourth, which sets out HIQA's strategic direction for the next three years.

The aim of communications and engagement activity is to assist HIQA in delivering its overall strategic objectives, and thus this document is fully aligned with the Corporate Plan 2016-2018, and to the goals set on in HIQA's annual business plans. The development of a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy for the period 2016-2018 is one of the key business planning objectives for this year.

HIQA has a wide variety of stakeholders spanning its broad and ever-increasing remit. The nature of HIQA's stakeholders continues to evolve as the environment within which HIQA operates changes. These changes include those in the wider political environment, changes in national and local health and social care service structures and policies, and the emergence of new parties and groups interested in HIQA's work. In compiling this strategy, HIQA conducted a review to ascertain who its key stakeholders are. Appendix 2 contains a list of HIQA's main stakeholder groups and provides examples of members of this group and of the mechanisms HIQA uses to engage with them. It is not a definitive list and merely serves to give an impression of who HIQA's stakeholders are and how it deals with them.

During the development of the Corporate Plan 2016-2018 and this year's business plan, the needs of stakeholders were thoroughly reviewed and a number of key themes relating to stakeholder engagement emerged.

While most respondents welcomed the engagement HIQA has pursued with stakeholders since its inception, it was suggested that there was scope to create even more opportunities to communicate with informed and interested parties and groups. In practice this could mean more awareness sessions, an increase in face-to-face meetings and a more user-friendly website.

A central message from the consultation was that work needs to be done to create a greater understanding of the role of HIQA, while other stakeholders indicated that they would welcome more balanced and positive media coverage of the findings of HIQA's inspection reports. As regards communication channels, the quarterly newsletter, *HIQA News*, was praised as a valuable resource, but it was proposed that HIQA could make better use of social media to share its message. These comments and recommendations have been taken on board and are reflected in this strategy.

HIQA is cognisant of the various barriers to effective stakeholder engagement, such as resources, ambiguity of messaging, the differing needs, capacity and capabilities

of stakeholders, time and organisational culture. Careful consideration of these challenges was made whilst drafting this strategy and the attendant action plans.

Where HIQA wants to be

HIQA's Corporate Plan 2016-2018 sets out four core outcomes for people using health and social care services that it aims to achieve. These are:



These outcomes embody the reason for HIQA's existence and importantly, what HIQA aims to achieve over the next three years. The Corporate Plan also identifies five core activities that HIQA will focus on to achieve its strategic outcomes. These are:



HIQA commits to building and developing transparent and constructive relationships with all those who fund, plan, provide and use health and social care services. Over the next three years, HIQA will:

- maintain existing relationships and seek to develop new relationships that focus on improving the safety and quality of health and social care services
- actively engage with the public and stakeholders to communicate the work of HIQA, this includes publishing clear information in an accessible manner.

HIQA recognises that creating and sustaining positive and open relationships with stakeholders is central to the successful achievement of its strategic objectives. HIQA is committed to engaging with the public and other groups to ensure that stakeholder views and concerns are reflected in its decision-making. The need to have an open discussion and debate with interested and informed parties is the driving force behind this strategy.

To deliver the overall aims of the Corporate Plan 2016-2018, HIQA has identified four communications and stakeholder engagement objectives that it will deliver over the next three years:

- **Inform** — HIQA will have ensured that the information it provides is balanced, objective, accurate and presented in an accessible manner to raise awareness of what HIQA does and what it has achieved.
- **Consult and engage** — HIQA will have developed systems and processes that enable it to seek the opinions of those who use; and those who fund, procure and provide; health and social care services. HIQA will actively seek opportunities to involve its stakeholders and will ensure that their views and opinions inform HIQA's work programmes, methods and outputs.
- **Work collaboratively** — HIQA will have strengthened and maintained existing relationships and built new, constructive partnerships in order to generate fresh ideas and share knowledge and expertise.
- **Be open and accountable** — HIQA will have shared information on its work in a timely, transparent fashion and complied with its statutory duties.

Each of these objectives is aligned to the communication and engagement principles that guide HIQA's engagement activities. These principles set the standards to which HIQA aspires in building open, respectful and inclusive working relationships. HIQA's communication and engagement principles are set out in Appendix 1.

How is HIQA going to get there?

The action plans allied to this strategy outline what HIQA will do to meet its four key communications and stakeholder engagement objectives in the years 2016-2018. They detail specific actions, key performance indicators, timelines and the person responsible for ensuring implementation of each action.

Communications and stakeholder engagement action plans are produced on an annual basis to take account of the changing environment in which HIQA works and to reflect the objectives included in HIQA's annual business plans. They are aligned with HIQA's resources, capabilities and competencies to ensure that all actions are realistic and achievable.

Priority areas included in the action plans are as follows:

- raising stakeholder awareness and understanding of the scope of HIQA's role and purpose
- ensuring that all documents are accurate, fair, balanced, accessible and, where relevant, reflect the experience of people who use services
- redeveloping HIQA's website to make it more user friendly
- collaborating with stakeholders on projects of mutual interest such as on the development of standards and guidelines, on the roll-out of the National Patient Experience Survey, and piloting the involvement of members of the public in our inspection and review process
- complying with statutory duties as regards communications and stakeholder engagement.

Overseeing the implementation of this strategy

This Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is aimed at supporting the overall work programme and strategic objectives of HIQA to 2018. It will guide and direct staff and management in achieving these objectives in an open, coordinated and consistent manner.

The action plans set out actions HIQA will undertake in the period 2016-2018 to meet its key objectives. Each action is accompanied by a key performance indicator (KPI) enabling measurement of performance against the targets set.

Progress against the achievement of the objectives and actions of this strategy will be regularly reviewed and reported on in line with HIQA's corporate performance reporting framework.

To ensure that all actions are undertaken, individual directorates will regularly review their own stakeholder objectives and priorities, update stakeholder lists, and devise targeted action plans.

In implementing this strategy, HIQA will adopt a focused, project-based approach and a system of continuous measurement will be undertaken to ensure its success. Execution of the action plan will be monitored by the Board of HIQA and its Executive Management Team as part of corporate performance reporting arrangements.

Appendix 1 — HIQA’s communications and stakeholder engagement principles

HIQA aspires to be:

- **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 where feasible
 - 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 of HIQA’s 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 its resources to make a real difference.

Appendix 2 – Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder group	Some examples of members of this group	Some examples of mechanisms
The Government and ministers	Department of an Taoiseach, Department of Health, Department of Children and Youth Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-to-one meetings ▪ Responding to information requests ▪ Corporate Plan 2016-2018 and other corporate documents
Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas and public representatives	Members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children, TDs, Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentations to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children ▪ Responding to parliamentary questions ▪ Regular meetings with TDs, spokespersons, etc.
People using services, carers, relatives, advocacy groups and charities	Residents of designated centres, hospital patients, Age Action Ireland, Inclusion Ireland, Patient Focus, Irish Patients Association, Irish Cancer Society, EPIC, Children’s Rights Alliance, ISPCC, National Parents and Siblings Alliance (NPSA), Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback and meaningful engagement during inspections ▪ Invitations to participate in focus groups ▪ Concerns about services
The public	Interested members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interacting with HIQA’s website ▪ Public consultation ▪ Traditional and social media engagement
Decision makers, service providers, front-line staff and state agencies	Health Service Executive, Tusla, individual providers, healthcare professionals, statutory and voluntary hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback during inspections ▪ Seminars and advisory groups ▪ memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and communication protocols
The media	National and regional newspapers, medical publications, internet news publications, radio and TV stations, freelance journalists, social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Press releases ▪ Giving media interviews ▪ Hosting press briefings ▪ Responding to media queries
Trade unions	Irish Medical Organisation (IMO), Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO), Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU), SIPTU, IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publications ▪ HIQA newsletter ▪ Meetings
Academic/research institutions	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), NUI Galway, Trinity College Dublin, UCD, UCC, ICGP, Royal College of Physicians Ireland (RCPI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving lectures ▪ Joint research groups ▪ Expert advisory groups

Professional regulators	Members of the Health, Social Care and Regulatory Forum, Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), General Medical Council (GMC), Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meetings ▪ Providing submissions ▪ Collaboration on legislation ▪ Strategic fora and interest groups
Professional bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national committees	Office of the Ombudsman, Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, Office of the Ombudsman for Children, UN Special Rapporteur on Child Protection, Health Informatics Society of Ireland (HISI), EUnetHTA, Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meetings ▪ Expert advisory groups ▪ MOU's and communication protocols
Representative bodies and trade associations	Nursing Homes Ireland, Irish Private Hospitals Association, Voluntary Hospitals Risk Management Group, Irish Homecare Association, Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA), Irish Medical and Surgical Trade Association (IMSTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expert advisory groups ▪ Invitations to participate in consultations



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Published by the
Health Information and Quality Authority

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