

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) about the *National Standards for Children's Residential Centres*

What is a children's residential centre?

A children's residential centre is a home for children who come into the care of the State to ensure that their needs are met when they cannot live with their own family. Children's residential centres should be homely and should promote the positive development of all children who live there.

What is HIQA's role in setting standards for children's residential centres?

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 our health and social care services in Ireland. One of HIQA's many functions is to set standards for health and social care services, including children's services. HIQA recognises the importance of increasing the quality and safety of care for all children, especially children who are particularly vulnerable and are living away from their families. Through these Standards, HIQA aims to promote progressive improvements in the care and support provided in children's residential centres.

What is the purpose of the National Standards?

These Standards aim to improve the care and support provided to each child living in residential care, to make sure they experience a service that meets their individual needs. They offer a common language to describe what a safe and effective children's residential centre should look like and create a basis for improving the quality and safety of children's residential care by identifying strengths and highlighting areas for improvement. They can also be used by children living in residential care and their families to understand what they should expect from a well-run service.

Who do the National Standards apply to?

The National Standards have been designed to apply to all children's residential centres, that is, centres operated by private, voluntary and statutory providers. They do not apply to designated centres for children with disabilities. Residential centres for children with disabilities have standalone standards, these are the *National Standards for Residential Services for Children and Adults with Disabilities*.

How were these National Standards developed?

The National Standards are based on national and international evidence, and were developed by engaging with a diverse range of informed and interested parties. This was achieved by convening an advisory group, conducting focus groups with children living in residential care, their families, advocates and staff working in these services, and submissions made during a six-week public consultation. Further information on the standards development process can be found on our website, www.hiqa.ie.

Are the Standards accessible to the children living in residential centres?

The National Standards have a section after each standard statement called 'What does this mean for me as a child?' This section helps children understand what a centre should be doing to meet the standard. HIQA also worked with children living in residential care to develop a guide to the standards that sets out their rights on their journey through care.

How will the National Standards be monitored?

These Standards have been approved by the Minister for Health, in consultation with the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Until now, all children's residential centres have been inspected against the national standards for children's residential centres developed by the Department of Health and Children in 2001. The new National Standards, developed by HIQA, will replace the 2001 standards.

Under the current legislative framework, children's residential centres run by Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) are inspected by HIQA and services run by private or voluntary organisations are registered and inspected by Tusla. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is currently drafting new regulations which will give HIQA responsibility for the registration and inspection of all children's residential centres.

Where can I find a copy of the National Standards?

A full copy of the National Standards, along with *Your guide to children's residential care* for children is available on www.hiqa.ie.

For further information about the National Standards, please contact the Standards team at standards@hiqa.ie.

For press queries, please contact:

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