



Health Information and Quality Authority

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis agus Cáilíocht Sláinte



We want to hear from you

How to provide feedback or make a complaint about a health service



2024



an independent organisation

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent organisation that promotes safety and quality in the provision of health and social care services for the benefit of the health and welfare of the public.



Content

About this booklet	1
Section 1: Sharing feedback on your care with HIQA	2
Section 2: Providing feedback about a healthcare service	4
Private hospitals and healthcare facilities	5
Your service, Your say	6
Section 3: If you are not happy with the response to your feedback	10
Office of the Ombudsman	10
Ombudsman for Children's Office:	11
Section 4: Providing feedback to other organisations	12
An Garda Síochána	12
Mental health services	13
Private hospitals	13
Healthcare regulators	14
Section 5: Support with providing feedback or making a complaint	16
Section 6: How to contact us	20



Health and social care --- services

- should welcome the opportunity to learn from the experience of people using their service, both good experiences and experiences that could have been better.
- should respond to feedback and try to put things right where people using their service communicate concerns to them.

About this booklet

This booklet explains what to do if you, a family member or someone acting on your behalf wants to give feedback or make a complaint about care or treatment in a service which is under HIQA's remit, for example public or voluntary acute and community hospitals, private hospitals, X-ray or radiotherapy services and the National Ambulance Service.

If you have had a good experience in a health or social care service or you have a concern about service, we would like you to tell us.

While HIQA is unable to investigate individual complaints about a health or social care service under the Health Act 2007, we listen to what you have to say and use your feedback to establish if a service is safe, effective, caring, and well managed.



For many, the thought of making a complaint can be off-putting, but this booklet aims to help make the process easier for you.

This booklet gives advice on:



**How to
make a complaint
or provide feedback**



**What to do
if you are not happy
with the response**

It also provides information on organisations that can support you, free of charge.

1 | Sharing feedback

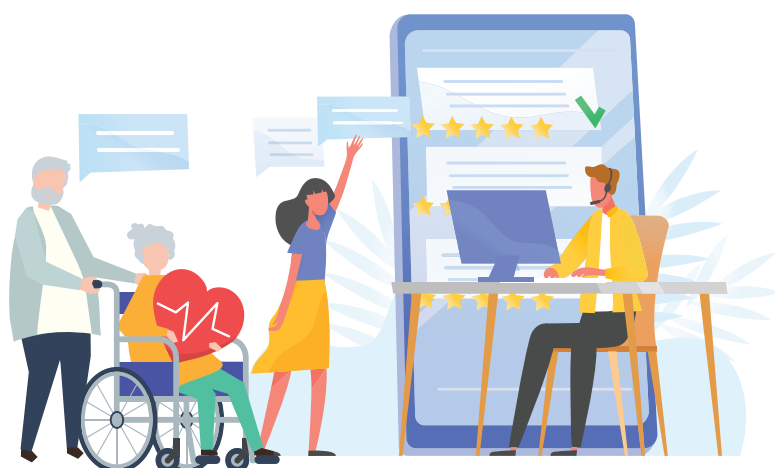
on your care with HIQA

Phone
021 240 9646

Online
www.hiqa.ie

Email
concerns@hiqa.ie

Post
HIQA, George's Court,
Smithfield, Dublin 7,
D07 E98Y



We would like you to tell us about

your experience of health and social care services, both good experiences and experiences that could have been better.

[The privacy notice](#) on our website sets out how we process all personal identifiable information that we generate and hold in the course of our work.



While HIQA is unable to investigate individual complaints about a health or social care service under the Health Act 2007, we will listen to what you have to say and can use your feedback in a number of ways to establish if a service is safe, effective, caring, and well managed.

What do we do with your feedback?

Your feedback will be reviewed by an inspector, which allows us to:



Identify

any trends or patterns that indicate something unacceptable may be happening



Track

what is happening in health and social care services



Complaints

consider how well providers handle complaints and concerns and use them as an opportunity for improvement



Ensure

services continue to meet essential standards of care

If we believe that those responsible for providing a service may not be compliant with the necessary regulations and or national standards, we can take a number of actions in response such as:

Planned inspection

Use the information at the next inspection planned for the service

Look for more information

Ask the responsible person for more information on the general issues of concern (not related to an individual person, patient, resident or child)

Request a plan

Request the responsible person to provide a plan on how they will address any identified issues

Risk-based inspection

Carry out a risk-based inspection or a focused inspection to assess the quality and safety of care provided to those using the service.



In serious cases, we may consider using our legal powers where there is strong evidence that people are at immediate risk.

2 | Providing feedback about healthcare services

If you are unhappy with the care or treatment you have received you have the right to make a complaint, have that complaint investigated and be given a full and prompt reply. By law, all public health services must have

a procedure for dealing efficiently with complaints. Private hospitals should also have a procedure for dealing with complaints efficiently. The person or organisation that is providing a service is responsible for investigating your concern.

If you have a complaint, you could first:



Speak with the staff providing the care who may be able to resolve your concern at this point



ask the service for a copy of their complaints procedure



This booklet also gives information on what to do if you are not happy with the response to your complaint (see Section 4).

Keep a record of your complaint

It is usually a good idea to keep a record by writing down who you spoke with, what you said, and what they said.

The service you complain to should let you know how long it will take to investigate your complaint and respond to you.

When you make a complaint or communicate your concerns to the person or people providing a healthcare service they must:

Acknowledge

acknowledge your complaint or concern

.....

Look into

look into and investigate your complaint or concern

.....

Update

let you know what they found

Respond

respond to you in a timely manner

Private hospitals and healthcare facilities

If you are unhappy with the care or treatment that was provided in a private hospital (or healthcare facility) you should contact the person or organisation that provided the service. This gives them the chance to listen to your concerns,

to try and put things right for you and identify any areas that can be improved on. Most private hospitals have a complaints officer to assist you and a complaints policy to outline how they manage complaints.



See section 5 for organisations that can provide you with support and advice free of charge.

Your service

Your say



The Health Services Executive (HSE) explains how you can give feedback to healthcare providers and hospitals in their complaints policy, “Your service, Your say”.

This policy is available in several languages on their website:

[HSE Complaints Policy](#).

If you would like to provide feedback about the care or treatment you have received from a publicly-provided healthcare

service (such as a hospital, GP practices, ambulance services or other healthcare service) you can contact the service directly, talk to the person delivering the care or ask to talk to a manager.

This gives them the chance to listen to your concerns, to try and put things right for you and identify any areas that can be improved on.

Your service

Your say

The “Your service, Your say” policy advises that you include the following information in a complaint:

- Who was involved
- What happened and when
- What your concerns are
- Have you done anything to resolve this matter
- What you want to happen now
- Any extra information and copies of other relevant documents.

Your service, Your say explains

- the different stages of complaint resolution,
- what happens if you are not happy with the outcome of the investigation,
- if you require an internal HSE review of how your complaint was looked into or if you want an external independent review (for example, through the Office of the Ombudsman or the Ombudsman for Children’s Office).

Your service Your say

You can contact the HSE in the following ways:



Phone

FREEPHONE 1800 424 555
FROM 9AM-5PM
MONDAY TO FRIDAY

+353 1 642 4555
FROM OUTSIDE IRELAND



Email

yoursay@hse.ie

Website

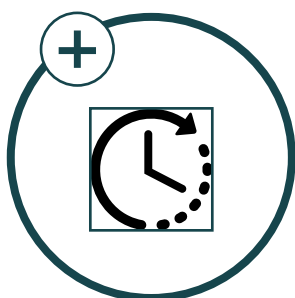
[Your service, Your say](#)



Online Form

[Your service, Your say feedback form](#)

Alternatively, you can contact HSE Live which provides guidance or support when navigating the Irish public health system.



Phone HSE Live

1800 700 700 or
041 6850 300, if using a mobile,
from 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and
10am-5pm on Saturdays.

If your complaint is not resolved

If your complaint is not resolved at that point, you can contact a HSE complaints officer. A complaints officer will acknowledge your complaint within five working days (Monday to Friday), and will look into your complaint and respond within 30 working days of it being acknowledged.

If it takes longer to look into all the issues raised in your complaint, the complaints officer will let you know within 30 working days, and will give you an update on what is happening every 20 working days after that.

Escalating feedback on hospitals

In the first instance you should address your feedback and or concerns to the hospital or healthcare service directly.

However, you may also wish to provide feedback or raise concerns

further in the service for example the hospital group, community area or Regional Health Areas. See the HSE's website for an up to date list of accountability arrangements and their contact details.

3 | If you are not happy with the response to your complaint



Office of the Ombudsman

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint or how it was dealt with, you can contact the Office of the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman can examine complaints from people who feel they have been unfairly treated by a public service provider. The Office can examine complaints against most organisations that deliver public services, including publicly-funded healthcare services.

The Ombudsman cannot look into a complaint if it is made more than 12 months after you first complained of the action or you became aware of that action, unless there are very special circumstances. The Office of the Ombudsman is unable to investigate claims relating to private practitioners or private hospitals.



Before you contact the Ombudsman it recommends that you should first try to resolve your complaint with the relevant service provider.

You can contact the Ombudsman in the following ways:

PHONE

01 639 5600

EMAIL

info@ombudsman.ie

POST

The Office of the Ombudsman,
6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2,
D02 W773

WEBSITE

www.ombudsman.ie

The Ombudsman for Children

can investigate complaints about public bodies providing services or making decisions about children and families, or organisations



**ombudsman
do leanaí
for children**

providing services on behalf of the State. The main functions of the Office are:

- to promote the rights and welfare of children and young people up to 18 years old
- to investigate complaints made by children or on behalf of children against public bodies, schools and hospitals.

Contact the Ombudsman for Children:

FREE-PHONE

1800 202 040

WEBSITE

www.oco.ie

POST

The Ombudsman for Children's Office, Millennium House,
52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1



Before you contact the Ombudsman for Children they recommend that you should first try to resolve your complaint with the relevant service provider.

4 | Providing feedback to other organisations

Matters of a suspected criminal nature should be made known to An Garda Síochána.



An Garda Síochána
Ireland's National Police & Security Service

Phone

your local garda station or via the
Garda Confidential line
1800 666 111

Website

www.garda.ie

**For details of how to contact your local Garda Station visit
www.garda.ie/en/Contact-Us/Station-Directory**



In emergency situations always dial 999 or 112.

Mental health services



If you have a concern in relation to mental health services you should contact the Mental Health Commission as they regulate and monitor mental health services. Under the Mental Health Acts 2001-2018, the Mental Health Commission does not have a statutory remit to manage individual complaints about mental health services.

They will use this information when inspecting services, and also endeavor to signpost individuals to the relevant agency who can best manage their complaint or can support or advocate for them while their complaint is being investigated.

You can contact the Mental Health Commission by:

Phone

01 636 2400
.....

Post

The Mental Health Commission,
Waterloo Exchange, Waterloo Road,
D04 E5W7
.....

Email

info@mhcirl.ie
.....

Website

www.mhcirl.ie
.....

Providing feedback

to other organisations

Healthcare regulators

If you have a concern or issues in relation to the practice and or conduct of an individual healthcare professional you should complain to the hospital or health service in the first instance.

If you feel your complaint involves professional misconduct, you may wish to contact the body that regulates their profession. A list of organisations and statutory bodies that regulate healthcare professionals are detailed next.



Dentists
The Dental Council

dentalcouncil.ie



Doctors
The Medical Council

medicalcouncil.ie



Nurses and Midwives
The Nursing and Midwifery Board
of Ireland (NMBI)

nmbi.ie



Pharmacists
The Pharmaceutical Society of
Ireland (PSI)

www.thepsi.ie



Pre-hospital Emergency Care practitioners
Pre-Hospital Emergency Care
Council (PHECC)

www.phecit.ie



**Social workers, physiotherapists, radiographers,
speech and language therapists, dietitians,
medical scientists, occupational therapists,
optometrists, radiation therapists**

CORU

www.coru.ie

5 | Support with providing feedback or making a complaint



Complaining can be a difficult experience

There are a number of organisations that can give you helpful advice and support. Having an advocate may be helpful. An advocate is someone who can act on the behalf of a child,

young person or their family when dealing with the social care service. An advocate can represent the views of those seeking information or making complaints when required.



Patient Advocacy Service:

The Patient Advocacy Service is an independent, free and confidential service that provides information and support to people who want to make a complaint about an experience they have had in a HSE-funded public acute hospital or HSE-operated nursing home making a formal complaint about their care. Further information can be found at www.patientadvocacyservice.ie or by phone **0818 293003**.



Cairde:

Is a community development organisation

working to tackle health inequalities among ethnic minority communities by improving their access to health services, and their participation in health planning and delivery. Further information can be found on: www.cairde.ie



Citizens Information:

Is the statutory body

which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services. Further information can be found on: www.citizensinformation.ie



Dignity 4 Patients:

Works with people who have suffered sexual abuse

abuse or inappropriate sexual behaviour while a patient in a medical or therapeutic setting. Further information can be found on: www.dignity4patients.org



EPIC (Empowering Young People in Care in Ireland):

A national child rights-based organisation

that works with and for children and young people who are currently living in care or who have experience of living in care. Further information can be found on: www.epiconline.ie



INCLUSION IRELAND

Inclusion Ireland:

Promotes advocacy for people

with an intellectual disability, particularly self-advocacy. Further information can be found on: www.inclusionireland.ie



Peer Advocacy in Mental Health:

Provides peer advocacy,

support and information to people with mental health difficulties. Further information can be found on: www.peeradvocacyinmentalhealth.com



Is a national charity

Irish Hospice Foundation:

dedicated to all matters relating to dying, death and bereavement in Ireland. Further information can be found on: www.hospicefoundation.ie



Irish Patients Association:

Advocates for the needs of patients

to be paramount, while working in partnership with health providers. Further information can be found on: www.irishpatients.ie



Legal Aid Board:

Provides legal advice

and representation in court. The Legal Aid Board also provides family mediation services. Further information can be found on: www.legalaidboard.ie



National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities:

Provides an independent, confidential and free representative advocacy service that works exclusively for the person using the service. Further information can be found on: <https://advocacy.ie>



Pavee Point:

A national non-governmental organisation

comprised of Travellers, Roma and members of the majority population working in partnership at national, regional, local and international levels. Further information can be found on: www.paveepoint.ie



Sage Advocacy:

is a support and advocacy service

for vulnerable adults, older people and healthcare patients. Further information can be found on: www.sageadvocacy.ie



The HSE Confidential Recipient:

Is a support and advocacy service

This is an independent person appointed by the HSE to receive concerns and allegations of abuse, neglect or bad practice

Phone: Office: 0871880523/Mobile: 0876657269

Email: grainne.cunningham@crhealth.ie

Website: [Office of the Confidential Recipient](#)

6 | How to contact us

HIQA has an Information Handling Centre Team who can assist you with providing feedback to HIQA.



How to Contact HIQA

Our dedicated Information Handling Centre Team will also advise you on other organisations or supports, as outlined in this booklet, which may be able to help you.



You can contact HIQA's Information Handling Centre Team in the following ways:

Phone

021 240 9646

Email

concerns@hiqa.ie

Post

Information Handling Centre
HIQA, George's Court,
Smithfield,
D07 E98Y

Website

www.hiqa.ie

Online Form

www.hiqa.ie/get-touch/report-concern-or-give-feedback



Thank you

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