

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING OF THE
HEALTH INFORMATION AND QUALITY AUTHORITY**

27 November 2024, 10.15am – 2pm
Smithfield Office, Dublin

Present:

Name	Details	Initials
Pat O'Mahony	Chairperson	POM
Bernadette Costello	Board Member	BC
Caroline Spillane*	Board Member	CS
Clíodhna Foley-Nolan	Board Member	CFN
Daniel McConnell	Board Member	DMC
James Kiely	Board Member	JK
Leonie Clarke	Board Member	LC
Lynsey Perdisatt	Board Member	LP
Marion Meany	Board Member	MM
Martin Higgins	Board Member	MH
Martin O'Halloran	Board Member	MOH
Paula Kilbane	Board Member	PK

In Attendance:

Name	Details	Initials
Angela Fitzgerald	Chief Executive Officer	AF
Máirín Ryan*	Director of Health Technology Assessment	MR
Bala Krishnan*	Chief Information Officer	BK
Sean Egan*	Director of Healthcare Regulation	SE
Finbarr Colfer*	Designated Chief Inspector of Social Services	FC
Patricia Harrington*	Deputy Director – HTA	PH
Aoife McCann*	Head of Legal Services	AMC
Pat Millar*	Clarion Consulting	PM
Karen Egan	Board Secretary	KE
Sukhneet Kaur Dhir	Board and Committee Secretariat Manager	SD

*Joined for part of the meeting

1.0 Quorum

The Chairperson welcomed Board members to the meeting. A quorum was present and the meeting was duly convened.

1.1 Board Only Session

The Chairperson provided an update to the Board on a personnel matter.

The matter of the designation by the Board of the functions of the Chief Inspector was discussed and it was noted that that a paper related to this was on the Board agenda for approval. The Board requested that best wishes be sent to the Chief Inspector at this time.

POM invited the Board to raise any other topics for discussion. PK asked that consideration be given to procedures for recording the outcomes of private Board sessions.

2.0 Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3.0 Board Minutes – (i) 19 August 2024 (ii) 2 October 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 19 August 2024 were reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. BC proposed approval of the minutes and PK seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that the minutes of 19 August 2024 be approved by the Board.**

The minutes of the meeting of 2 October 2024 were reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. POM proposed approval of the minutes and LC seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that the minutes of 2 October 2024 be approved by the Board.**

4.0 Review of Actions

KE referred the Board to the paper on actions arising from the previous meeting. She advised that a number of actions are in progress as indicated.

5.0 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6.0 Emerging Issues and Risks

No emerging issues or risks were brought to the Board for discussion.

7.0 Health and Safety Matters

AF advised that the staff comfort issues in the HIQA Dublin office had been resolved and an update on these would be provided under the CEO report agenda item.

8.0 Board Committee Report

Standards, Information, Research and Technology Committee (SIRT) – 12 November 2024

JK, Chair of the SIRT Committee, advised that the main items reviewed at this meeting were as follows:

- Annual Executive Assurances Reports from the HTA and HIS Directorates were presented.
- The revised Scheme of Approval for the HTA Directorate was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Board.
- The process outline for the HTA of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Ireland was reviewed and recommended by the Committee for approval by the Board.
- An update on HTA and HIS risks was provided to the Committee.

JK also advised that the Committee received a presentation on the HIS Directorate National Standards and Support Implementation Tools Plan.

Regulation Committee – 14 November 2024

MOH, Chair of the Regulation Committee, advised that the Committee had reviewed a range of topics at the meeting and that much of this is covered in the CEO and Chief Inspector Reports. However, he drew the Board's attention to the following:

- Annual Executive Assurances Reports from the Chief Inspector and Director of Healthcare were presented.
- A Report from the Chief Inspector was presented.
- An update was provided on the Networks and Integration Security Directive (NIS-2) and the Critical Entities Resilience Directive (CER Directive).
- A Report from the Director of Healthcare Regulation, including an update on the Mid-West Review, the CHI review and IPAS.
- An update on Corporate Performance and Risks in Regulation Healthcare and Social Services was provided to the Committee.

MOH also advised that the Committee received a presentation from the Legal team on the Law Reform Commission's Report on a Regulatory Framework for Adult Safeguarding.

Audit, Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC) – 19 November 2024

BC, Chair of the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee reported that the following items were reviewed in detail at the ARGC meeting on 19 November 2024:

- A progress update on the 2024 Internal Audit Plan was presented by Forvis Mazars.
- The Internal Audit Plan for 2025 was approved by the Committee.
- The preliminary Annual Assurance Report 2024 was presented by the Head of Quality, Risk and Compliance, along with the Annual Executive Assurance Reports from the Chief Executive Officer's Office and Operations Directorate.
- An update on Corporate and Directorate risks was provided by the Head of Quality, Risk and Compliance.
- An update on Risk Management and Internal Audit Recommendations in HTA Directorate was presented.
- The Finance Report to September 2024 was presented.
- An update on DER Finances were noted by the Committee.
- The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference for the ARGC.
- The updated Risk Management Handbook and Policy were reviewed by the Committee and recommended for approval by the Board.

Resource Oversight Committee (ROC) – 21 November 2024

LP, Chair of the Resource Oversight Committee, advised that the Committee had reviewed a range of topics at its recent meeting, including the following items:

- Transactions for approval were reviewed and recommended by the Committee for approval by the Board.
- Updates on Corporate Performance and Risk Management were presented.
- Annual Executive Assurances from the HR, Information and Communications Directorates were presented.
- An update on DER, including finances and risks was provided.
- A report on Human Capital, including strategic workforce planning, and delivery of the competency framework was presented.
- An update on the Digital and Data Transformation Strategy Report.
- An update on delivery of the ROC Terms of Reference.
- The Annual Assurance Report from the Legal team on Joint Working Arrangements (JWAs) was reviewed and recommended for the consideration of the Board.

9.0 CEO's Report

Finbarr Colfer (FC), Designated Chief Inspector, and Sean Egan (SE), Director of Healthcare joined the meeting at this point.

AF highlighted the following from her report:

Corporate Governance

- Board comments on Corporate Plan were incorporated in the draft Plan which was released for public consultation on 25 October 2025.

Quality, Risk and Compliance

- HIQA was successful in its annual ISO 9001:2005 Audit. The Annual Surveillance Audit had taken place in early November 2024 and no deviations or non-conformances had been noted. AF acknowledged the work of the Quality, Risk and Compliance unit on this significant achievement and also thanked the Executive Management Team in providing strong nominations from their teams to support the work.

Strategic HR Issues

- An updated Business Case relating to HIQA Strategic Workforce plan had been submitted to the Department of Health.
- A proportion of the requested roles were expected to be fully sanctioned prior to year-end, including priority roles relating to strengthening the corporate spine and the regulation of disability. Meetings with Department of Health officials are ongoing in relation to the remaining roles.

Facilities

- A report was provided on the Dublin premises, including engagement with the Office of Public Works in relation to HIQA's office requirements in Dublin following the introduction of the blended working model.
- Several issues in the Dublin office, including a fault in the heating system, have now been fully resolved and would continue to be monitored.
- HIQA continues to focus on energy saving in accordance with Government requirements to reduce its carbon footprint. To date, a reduction of 36.9% has been achieved and work towards the target of a 51% reduction by 2030 will continue.

Preparation for the Covid-19 Evaluation

- Work has taken place to ensure preparedness for the proposed evaluation into the State's handling on the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The project team have reviewed recent announcements regarding the appointment of a Chair and the terms of reference for the evaluation and other preparatory work continues.

Healthcare Regulation — Strategic Developments

- The Patient Safety (Open Disclosure and Notifiable Incidents) Act commenced on 26 September 2024.
- HIQA now has additional statutory responsibilities, including the receipt of notifications for serious reportable events via the NIMS system, and monitoring in private healthcare facilities, for the first time. As a result of the preparatory work undertaken by HIQA regulatory and ID teams including technical upgrades and stakeholder engagement planning, the commencement has progressed well to date.

- Recruitment for priority positions within the Healthcare Directorate is ongoing.

The Networks and Integration Security Directive (NIS-2)

- HIQA continues to engage with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) and the National Cybersecurity Centre, working closely with colleagues in the Department of Health.
- While progress has been made, all of the conditions set by the HIQA Board in order for HIQA to assume responsibilities have not yet been achieved, with further consideration required by DECC. Should these preconditions be met in due course, further engagement with the HIQA Board will follow.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) Mission of HIQA as a regulator of medical exposures

- The Healthcare Directorate was requested by the Department of Health to add preparations for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) Mission in early 2026 to business plans for 2025.

Monitoring of International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS)

- While the profile of centres had changed, the number of centres under HIQA's remit remains at 45.
- HIQA is considering the impact of the EU Migration Pact, and is also engaging with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on strategic issues related to the future arrangements for this service. An update will be brought to a future Board meeting in this regard.

Health Technology Assessment

- The International Review of Publicly Funded Services for Fertility Preservation to inform the development of a national fertility preservation policy for Ireland was published in October 2024.

Health Information and Standards

- A review of national standards and implementation support tools is underway to ensure they are up-to-date, fit for purpose and responsive to the needs of both those using services and those providing services. The review will feed into the update of the Standards for Safer Better Healthcare which will cover both public and private hospitals.
- The Department of Health has asked HIQA to consider the development of an ethical and safe use guidance framework for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in health and social care in the 2025 Business Plan.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) review

AF provided an update on the CHI review, and advised the following:

- The Board will receive a briefing on the CHI report when the final report is available.

- In terms of the Board's oversight role, in advance of the release of the report, the Board will be asked to confirm that the review was carried out in compliance with the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

The Board agreed that an assurance paper providing an overview of how the QAF was complied with should be brought to the Board early in 2025.

The Board thanked AF for her comprehensive report.

10.0 Chief Inspector's Report

Finbarr Colfer (FC), Designated Chief Inspector, provided an update on the Chief Inspector's activities and highlighted the following from the report:

Older Persons team

- On 17 October, a 15 year overview report on the regulation of nursing homes was published. It outlines the evolution, challenges, and impact of regulating nursing homes in Ireland over the past 15 years.
- As of 29 October 2024, there are 551 designated centres for older people with 32,503 registered beds.
- The registration of one designated centre was cancelled since the previous report, and this designated centre is currently being operated by the Health Service Executive.
- The top four reasons for non-compliant findings related to governance and management, fire precautions, premises and notification of incidents.

Disability team

- The report on the 10 year review of regulating disability centres was launched in November 2024. It acknowledges and highlights the good work and improvements that have been realised in the sector during the period.
- There had been a net increase of 84 designated centres since the beginning of the year.
- 916 inspections of centres for people with disabilities and been completed so far this year and 715 inspection reports had been published.
- A small number of providers continue to be of concern in relation to compliance levels, and these are being monitored.
- Ongoing resourcing issues in relation to staffing have impacted on the capacity of the Disability team to regulate designated centres, but the forthcoming uplift in resources should allow a return to usual levels of regulatory activity.

Children's Team

- The 10-Year Anniversary Report for the Children's Pillar is scheduled to be launched in December 2024. The report acknowledges improvements in a number of areas and sets out how aspects of children's services are working well. It also details HIQA's findings, learnings and reflects on challenges for the sector.
- Overall, the findings of inspections of Tusla services continue to be varied.

- Improvements are required in the governance of services and resourcing is impacting on the delivery of services to some children.

Court Proceedings

FC provided an overview of legal actions currently underway including criminal prosecutions and appeals.

The Board thanked FC for his report and also complimented the Disability and Older Persons Review reports and launch events.

11.0 DER Status Report

[Redacted]

12.0 Update on Mid-West Review

AF provided an update on the Mid-West Review and highlighted the following:

- HIQA is undertaking a review of urgent and emergency care in the HSE Mid-West region at the request of the Minister for Health.
- The work of the review is a collaborative effort by the Healthcare Regulation and the HTA Directorates.
- The HTA public health policy team is supporting the evidence synthesis component of the review.
- The first meeting of the Expert Advisory Group will take place in December 2024.
- HIQA is working to a deadline of May 2025 for the review.

The Board thanked AF for the update and advised that population projections for the affected communities should be included in the review.

SE left the meeting at this point.

13.0 Update on National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) transition

Máirín Ryan (MR), Director of Health Technology Assessment (HTA), and Patricia Harrington (PH), Deputy Director – HTA joined the meeting for this item.

JK introduced the item and noted the importance of this issue. He advised that an update had been provided at the recent meeting of the Standards, Information, Research and Technology Committee following which an in-depth discussion had taken place.

MR and PH gave the presentation on NIAC as a HIQA function and highlighted the following:

- Engagement with NIAC, including on the proposed process for appointment of the Chair of the National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (NITAG).
- Engagement with the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), including on the transfer of the NIAC brand and files.
- Engagement with the Department of Health.
- The project plan and timelines for the transition of the NITAG function to HIQA.
- Issues regarding the transfer of staff into HIQA.

The Board thanked MR and PH for the update and noted the continued good work on this matter. The Board advised that the Executive seek specialist HR advice regarding Transfer of business (TUPE) and pensions for transferring staff. They asked that a further update be brought to the Board at its next meeting.

MR and PH left the meeting at this point.

14.0 Finance Report

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

15.0 Human Capital Report

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

16.0 Presentation for New Commencements from Legal Unit

Aoife McCann (AMC), Head of Legal Services, gave the presentation on emerging legislation and its impact on HIQA's statutory remit, highlighting commenced legislation and legislation in development.

The Board thanked AMC for the excellent presentation and the ongoing work of her team in supporting HIQA through expert identification of key legal issues.

17.0 Review of Formal Schedule of Matters for Board Decision

Karen Egan (KE), Board Secretary introduced this item.

The Board noted the Report previously circulated. No amendments were proposed to the Formal Schedule of Matters for Board Decision.

18.0 Designation by the Board for the functions of the Chief Inspector

POM advised that the Chief Inspector of Social Services is on extended leave for personal reasons and that Section 41(2) of the Health Act 2007 as amended provides that, in such circumstances, the Authority can designate an Inspector of Social Services to perform the functions of the Chief Inspector.

POM proposed the following:

- a) The Board resolves that the functions of the Chief Inspector of Social Services under Section 41 and Section 43(2) of the Health Act 2007 as amended will be performed by an Inspector of Social Services, designated by the Authority for the purpose of Section 41(2) of the Act.
- b) The Board resolves that the designated Inspector of Social Services is Finbarr Colfer, who currently holds the position of Deputy Chief Inspector, Disability.
- c) The Board makes this designation pursuant to Section 41(2) of the Act.
- d) The designated Inspector of Social Services will also perform the non-statutory/administrative functions of the Chief Inspector generally and as required.

MM seconded the proposal, **accordingly, the Board unanimously resolved that Finbarr Colfer be the designated Inspector of Social Services to:**

- i. **Perform the functions of the Chief Inspector of Social Services under Section 41 and Section 43(2) of the Health Act 2007 as amended, and**
- ii. **Perform the non-statutory/administrative functions of the Chief Inspector generally and as required from today's date until such time as either (a) the Board revokes this designation or (b) the Chief Inspector of Social Services returns to work, whichever is the earlier.**

19.0 The Critical Entities Resilience (CER) Directive

AF noted that the Board had resolved by written procedure on 30 May 2024 for HIQA to accept the role of Competent Authority under the Critical Entities Resilience (CER) Directive, subject to remaining legislative, regulatory and resources matters being clarified to the satisfaction of the Executive.

AF advised that:

- Engagement had been ongoing with the Departments of Defence and Health to resolve outstanding areas of clarification.
- The Department of Health will need to progress an amendment to the Health Act 2007 to enable HIQA to take on this role. Pending the establishment of a new Government, this may take some time to finalise.
- Notwithstanding the need for legislative amendment, the HIQA Executive is now satisfied that all remaining queries relating to legislative, regulatory and initial resourcing matters have been resolved and requests Board approval for HIQA to take on of this role of Competent Authority, given that all conditions have been met or are at advanced planning stage.

MOH proposed the approval of HIQA assuming responsibilities as a Competent Authority under the CER Directive and MM seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that HIQA assuming responsibilities as a Competent Authority under the CER Directive be approved by the Board.**

20.0 Scheme of Approval for HTA Directorate Outputs

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

JK proposed the approval of the Scheme of Approval for HTA Directorate Outputs and MH seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was unanimously resolved that the Scheme of Approval for HTA Directorate Outputs be approved by the Board.**

21.0 Immunisation RSV HTA process outline

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

JK proposed the approval of the process outline for health technology assessment of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Ireland and PK seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the process outline for a health technology assessment of immunisation against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in Ireland be approved by the Board.**

22.0 Transactions for approval (BP Award of Contracts)

The Board noted the paper previously circulated.

LP proposed the approval of award of contracts to Ipsos B&A, Mason Hayes Curran, Byrne Wallace, Unifii and Micromail, and BC seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the award of contracts to Ipsos B&A, Mason Hayes Curran, Byrne Wallace, Unifii and Micromail be approved by the Board.**

23.0 Updated Risk Management Policy and SOP

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

BC proposed the approval of the Updated Risk Management Handbook and SOP and LP seconded the proposal; **accordingly it was resolved that the Updated Risk Management Handbook and SOP be approved by the Board.**

24.0 Chairperson's Report

The Board noted the Report previously circulated.

25.0 Assurance Report on JWAs

The Board noted the Report previously circulated.

26.0 Any other business

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 14.05.

Signed



Pat O'Mahony
Chairperson



Karen Egan
Board Secretary

Actions arising from Board meeting – 27 November 2024

No.	Action	Person Responsible	Timeframe
1	An assurance paper providing an overview of how the QAF was complied with on the CHI review should be brought to the Board early in 2025.	SE	Board meeting in Q1 2025
2	DER project team to consider longer-term support for the system and the eventual need to engage a third party to provide support.	DER project team	Jan Board meeting
3	Population projections for the affected communities should be included in the Mid West review.	MR	Jan Board meeting
4	NIAC: advice to be sought on TUPE and pensions. A further update to be brought to the Board at its next meeting.	MR	Jan Board meeting
5	Consideration to be given to procedures for recording the outcomes of private Board sessions.	KE	Note will be provided to Board in Q1 2025
Actions carried forward from previous meetings		Person Responsible	Timeframe
6.	The next six-monthly review of risk management to include a review of risk appetite and risk profiles against other regulators.	ED	March 2025 Board meeting
7.	Executive to prepare a report on review of fee income.	SA	January 2025 Board meeting
8.	The lead-in time for recruitment be reflected in the timelines for the 2025 Business Plan Objectives.	SM/SA	When 2025 Business Plan is being prepared
9.	Business Case on the transfer of the NITAG function to HIQA be submitted to the Board.	MR	At appropriate time
10.	A paper providing clarification on the NIS-2 proposal, including setting out the impact on HIQA as an organisation of taking on the new functions under NIS-2, to be brought to the Board.	SE	At appropriate time
11.	Show percentage of training/education days against the overall number of working days.	SM	Ongoing

12.	Consideration to be given to governance arrangements for occasions when staff members are appointed to external bodies. AF agreed to come back with an update on this to the Board.	KE/SM	Ongoing
13.	Regulation committee to maintain oversight of developments on OPCAT. A report will come back to the Board at the appropriate time.	MoH/KE	When Appropriate