



## Welcome

Welcome to our first quarterly newsletter for the family and friends of those living in residential care centres around Ireland. This newsletter is written by the recently established National Relatives Panel, which operates under the auspices of the Social Services Inspectorate, part of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

HIQA is the independent Authority/Regulator, established by the Government, to drive high quality and safe care for the people who use our health and social services. The Social Services Inspectorate, in turn, is responsible for the establishment of quality standards and the regular inspection nationwide of both private and public residential care centres (commonly referred to as “nursing homes”) to improve standards of care.

## Who We Are

We are a group of volunteers, who have come together in a positive spirit to help drive ongoing improvements for all of our loved ones in residential care. We truly understand your questions and concerns. This newsletter is designed to inform and empower you. This is your forum. We are your voice.

We are a national group – coming from a wide cross section of counties, representing both urban and rural areas. In terms of background, many different jobs and professions are represented around the table. However, we are all united in one regard – we have family or friends residing in residential care. We remain actively involved in their care and are regular visitors to their care centres. We acknowledge the good care that many of our relatives receive but in many cases believe that there is scope to further enhance their quality of life.

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## Our Terms of Reference

- Provide a platform of communication between the relatives of those in residential care and HIQA with the aim of driving improvements for older people in residential care settings.
- Provide a common aim for high quality care for older people in residential care settings and encourage the delivery of the best services possible.
- Support the relatives of those in residential care and provide a forum for discussion.
- Promote expectations of what services should be like as well as sharing and highlighting good practice in service provision.
- Inform HIQA where issues of concern exist and where additional improvements can be made in residential services for older people.
- Act as a means for the Authority to share information on its regulatory processes and receive feedback on the impact of the Authority's new regulatory system.

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*Our mission is to work with HIQA and the providers of residential care centres around Ireland to drive excellence in standards of care. We are passionate in our desire to make a difference.*

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Dr Tracey Cooper,  
CEO, HIQA

## One Year On - The New Standards

*The following article is taken from an interview by The Irish Times with the Health Information and Quality Authority in October 2010.*

According to HIQA, there is real evidence of a changing culture of care, thanks to the new standards and inspection regime, introduced in 2009. Inspection of every single residential care centre (private and public) has now taken place. About half the inspections to residential care centres are announced beforehand and half are unannounced. Some are carried out at night and at weekends. Some 63 inspections were initiated following specific concerns raised by a member of the public, politicians, journalists or social workers. Some 52 centres have received three visits or more from inspectors, signalling that some serious concerns were identified during inspections.

Once finalised, a detailed report for each individual centre is published online at [www.hiqa.ie/functions\\_ssi\\_inspect\\_rep\\_older\\_people.asp](http://www.hiqa.ie/functions_ssi_inspect_rep_older_people.asp). Any time delay between the time of inspection and the publication of the report is generally to allow the Inspectorate to follow up on identified issues and to agree an action plan with the provider.

According to HIQA, "All our inspections are resident focused. We sit with the residents, eat with the residents and chat with them. This allows us to monitor how staff interacts with residents." Inspectors also ask relatives, present at the time of the inspection, for feedback and encourage providers to distribute a questionnaire to other family members.

HIQA believes that the quality of management is critical to the standard of care provided. "People have worked very hard all their lives and, as a society, we owe it to them to give them a decent place to live in, one that enables their independence."





## Sharing the Best – Maintaining a Sense of Adventure

### In this spotlight series, we look at best practice in activities.

According to a recent report from the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology at NUI Galway, significant financial savings can be made by the State in health and care costs, if older people are encouraged to engage in creative arts and in physical activity. The research findings confirm what has been known for countless generations – a healthy and outgoing lifestyle, with appropriate exercise, contributes to a happy and productive old age from a physical, psychological and social perspective. As life expectancy increases, the need to remain alert, healthy and focused through involvement in the creative arts and in physical activity becomes more important. Growing old should not mean losing a sense of adventure.

So find out what your relative is interested in – ask them what activities they would like to partake in, and let the staff at the residential care centre know so that they can respond. Below are some activities that provide social interaction and which might interest your relative. One point to note – you do not have to wait for the centre to initiate an activity – why not make a suggestion or better still, volunteer your services? Perhaps you are a great musician or story teller? Can you spare an hour or two regularly to play cards or to just sit and talk? The bottom line is that this should be a partnership approach, where we work together with the provider to ensure a high quality of physical care and intellectual stimulation for our loved ones. As relatives and friends, we have a critical part to play. Remember, variety is the spice of life – it is important that activities are varied as otherwise people get bored. Would you like to repeat the same activities, day after day, week after week? The older person is no different.

### Special Events

All birthdays and special events should be marked during the year – many residential care units celebrate Christmas, Easter, St Patrick's Day and Halloween with decorations, music, and a small party. Having a local school participate to put on a display of music and dance adds an extra community touch. Perhaps consider putting up some decorations in your relative's room to make it even more special? Visit on the day and be part of the celebration.



### Regular Opportunities for Social Interaction

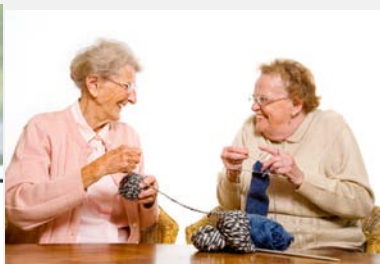
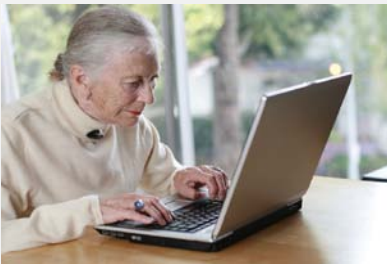
- Time is the most magical ingredient. A cup of tea and an unhurried chat can mean so much.
- Music afternoons or evenings by staff of the residential unit, relatives, friends and other locals.
- Story telling – perhaps, reading aloud from old style books like *To School Through the Fields* by Alice Taylor.
- A visit by the local museum to bring in objects from the past – the residents can have great fun trying to guess what the objects were used for.
- Casino, poker or soccer nights are always popular options, especially with the Champions League and the Premiership. Rugby afternoons can also be fun
- Show an old movie using a large screen and projector. Why not simulate the atmosphere of the cinema with a treat at the interval? Show old TV shows on video – for example *The Live Mike*; *Fawlty Towers* or *Dad's Army*. Other options are old western movies as well as boxing or sporting videos. You can also hold a Karaoke evening (include, for example, music from Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, John McCormack).

## Sharing the Best – Maintaining a Sense of Adventure

### Hobbies and Crafts

Finding something that interests the older person provides them with enjoyment and a sense of positive self-esteem. Many of these activities also help the older person to maintain important cognitive skills as well as eye and hand coordination and fine motor skills. Depending on interests and ability, the following are examples of possible crafts or hobbies that the older person might enjoy.

- Baking buns and cakes.
- Drawing and painting.
- Gardening.
- Flower arranging.
- Help in maintaining a vegetable garden or the bird feeders.
- Knitting.
- Making a rug.
- Kitting – making a model airplane.
- Playing music from their era.
- Keeping scrapbooks.
- Making their own story books can be achieved through one-to-one conversations, and using family photographs.
- Photography – some may like to take snaps, however, just looking at old photographs can evoke many memories. A digital screen in the resident's room showing a rotating selection of family photographs can be stimulating.
- Games like dominoes, draughts, chess, card games like 25, poker or bridge as well as board games like Scrabble are good choices.
- Bingo and musical bingo are usually popular.
- Playing pool and darts (rubber tipped). Many enjoy horse racing – selecting their favourite horses and being able to place a bet from the comfort of the residential care centre.
- Puzzles – jigsaw, crossword puzzles either individually or collectively through use of a large board, word search or picture search in the newspaper, for example who can find the picture of the vegetables in the newspaper.
- Exercise classes, including yoga for the older person.
- Massage – touch is very important particularly for those with dementia.
- Computer classes for beginners – a great way to enable residents with families abroad to stay in touch via email or Skype. Perhaps a local company might volunteer to help?



**In upcoming issues, we look at the importance of community trips, establishing clubs, and one-to-one communications, including activities for residents with dementia. Watch out for interviews with experts and best practice case studies. We welcome your valuable contributions.**



Do you have ideas for inclusion in this newsletter? Are there best practices that you want to share? Do you have questions that you would like to see addressed in this newsletter? Would the answer benefit others? If so, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact us as follows:

**By email:**

[acarroll@hiqa.ie](mailto:acarroll@hiqa.ie), marking the subject of your email *Reach – Relative Newsletter Contribution*

**By post at:**

The National Relatives Panel,  
c/o Andrea Carroll,  
Health Information and Quality Authority,  
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George's Court, George's Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7.

If you are interested in receiving this newsletter automatically by email, please subscribe by sending your name and email address to the following email [acarroll@hiqa.ie](mailto:acarroll@hiqa.ie) with the subject line marked *Subscribe to Reach Newsletter*.

## Learn More

The Health Act 2007, Regulations 2009  
[www.dohc.ie/legislation/statutory\\_instruments/pdf/si20090236.pdf](http://www.dohc.ie/legislation/statutory_instruments/pdf/si20090236.pdf)

HIQA Standards  
[www.hiqa.ie/media/pdfs/Residential\\_Care\\_Report\\_Older\\_People\\_20090309.pdf](http://www.hiqa.ie/media/pdfs/Residential_Care_Report_Older_People_20090309.pdf)

A hard copy of the HIQA Standards is also available on request from HIQA.

## Useful Contacts

HIQA	Tel, 01 8147400	<a href="http://www.hiqa.ie">www.hiqa.ie</a>
Age Action Ireland	Tel, 01 4756989	<a href="http://www.ageaction.ie">www.ageaction.ie</a>
Alzheimer Society	Tel, 1800 341 341	<a href="http://www.alzheimer.ie">www.alzheimer.ie</a>
Parkinson's Association	Tel, 1800 359 359	<a href="http://www.parkinsons.ie">www.parkinsons.ie</a>

## Did You Know?

### Important Information about Your Relative's Care Plan

As well as the Standards, the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2009 (as amended) is used by the HIQA inspectors on inspection.

These are the legal requirements for the provision of services in nursing homes. It is a legal offence not to comply with them.

For example, did you know that according to Article 8: Assessment and Care Plan, all residents must have a care plan that is agreed with them, is available to them and is reviewed with them at least every three months?

The Standards state that the care plan should not just be about the residents' health needs, but also about their social and personal needs.

The Standards also state that where a resident has a cognitive impairment, the care plan should be developed and agreed with the resident's representative.

**What would you like to see covered in future Did You Know features? We welcome your suggestions.**