



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Draft Corporate Plan **2025-2027**

About the Health Information and Quality Authority

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent statutory body established to promote safety and quality in the provision of health and social care services for the benefit of the health and welfare of the public.

Reporting to the Minister for Health and engaging with the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, HIQA has responsibility for the following:

- **Setting standards for health and social care services** — Developing person-centred standards and guidance, based on evidence and international best practice, for health and social care services in Ireland.
- **Regulating social care services** — The Chief Inspector of Social Services within HIQA is responsible for registering and inspecting residential services for older people and people with a disability, and children’s special care units.
- **Regulating health services** — Regulating medical exposure to ionising radiation.
- **Monitoring services** — Monitoring the safety and quality of permanent international protection accommodation service centres, health services and children’s social services against the national standards. Where necessary, HIQA investigates serious concerns about the health and welfare of people who use health services and children’s social services.
- **Health technology assessment** — Evaluating the clinical and cost effectiveness of health programmes, policies, medicines, medical equipment, diagnostic and surgical techniques, health promotion and protection activities, and providing advice to enable the best use of resources and the best outcomes for people who use our health service.
- **Health information** — Advising on the efficient and secure collection and sharing of health information, setting standards, evaluating information resources and publishing information on the delivery and performance of Ireland’s health and social care services.
- **National Care Experience Programme** — Carrying out national service-user experience surveys across a range of health and social care services, with the Department of Health and the HSE.

Visit www.hiqa.ie for more information.

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Section 1. Foreword

We are delighted to introduce HIQA’s Draft Corporate Plan 2025–2027. This Corporate Plan outlines a clear strategic direction for the next three years. Over this period, we will remain responsive to the needs of the public and will continue to work towards our vision of health and social care providers consistently delivering excellent standards of care and the best possible outcomes for people using services.

This Corporate Plan will take us up to 2027, which is a particularly significant date for HIQA as it marks our 20th anniversary. Since 2007, we have been dedicated to promoting high standards in health and social care services across Ireland. Our journey has been one of continuous improvement, innovation, and collaboration, and we are proud of the progress we have made. In a rapidly changing health and social care environment, HIQA’s responsibilities have grown significantly. This expansion continues with the addition of new statutory functions, presenting both opportunities and challenges. As we mark this milestone, our commitment to promoting human rights and valuing the needs of the people we work with and for remains steadfast.

We are keenly aware that a range of external factors can impact HIQA’s programme of work, and we recognise the importance of listening to the views of our stakeholders, including patients and people using services, policymakers, service providers, advocacy groups, HIQA staff, and the wider public. In developing this plan, we embarked on an extensive engagement programme with our stakeholders. We sought their views on what has worked well in the last three years, the challenges that HIQA faces in the next three years and what our priorities should be for the future. We would like to thank everyone who has helped us shape our vision for the years ahead. In particular, we extend our thanks to our dedicated and competent staff and Board; their drive, passion and commitment to our values and mission continues to be key to all that we achieve.

For this Corporate Plan, we have shifted our approach from traditional goal setting to more tangible outcomes that we want to see achieved by 2027. While the focus of the Corporate Plan is the next three years, we have also looked at the longer term outcomes we want to accomplish.

We have sought to set out desired outcomes over the next three years, and these will be the benchmarks by which we will measure our success. By adopting an outcomes focus, we aim to enable the best possible health and social care outcomes for all, through evidence-informed decision-making, standard setting, and regulation.

As we implement this Corporate Plan, we look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Health; the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; service providers; people using services and the wider public.

We are confident that, with our Corporate Plan to guide us, we will deliver on our ambitious strategic priorities.

Section 2. Background

HIQA is an independent statutory authority established to promote safety and quality in health and social care services across Ireland. Our primary objective is to enhance the health and welfare of the public by ensuring that the care provided is safe, effective, and respectful of individual rights. Our broad mandate extends across a diverse range of public, private, and voluntary sector services, reflecting our commitment to uphold high standards in all areas of care.

As we develop our new Corporate Plan, we recognise that the health and social care landscape has evolved significantly. HIQA continues to grow and adapt in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. This Corporate Plan will outline our strategic priorities and initiatives, ensuring that we remain responsive to the needs of the public and committed to promoting the highest standards of care and safeguarding individual rights in all services we regulate.

2.1 Context

In a rapidly changing health and social care environment, HIQA's responsibilities have grown significantly since our inception in 2007. This expansion continues with the addition of new statutory functions. We have identified key policy and legislative developments that will impact our work. These include:

- **Patient Safety (Notifiable Incidents and Open Disclosure) Act 2023:** This Act mandates the compulsory reporting of notifiable incidents, expanding HIQA's oversight to include private healthcare providers and monitoring compliance against national standards.
- **International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) centres:** HIQA is responsible for monitoring and inspecting permanent IPAS centres to ensure compliance with the National Standards for Accommodation Offered to People in the Protection Process.
- **EU Health Technology Assessment Regulation (HTAR):** This regulation will, from 2025, provide a framework for the co-production of HTA information by European HTA agencies. HIQA will undertake joint clinical assessments of health technologies including vaccines and high-risk medical devices and diagnostics within the HTAR framework.
- **European Health Data Space Regulations:** These regulations will standardise how health information is shared at a national and European level for primary and secondary uses.
- **The expanded Network and Information Security Directive (NIS-2):** This directive will enhance cybersecurity measures across critical sectors, with

HIQA’s Board approving, in principle, the organisation's potential responsibilities under the legislation, subject to clarity on roles, fit-for-purpose legislation, and appropriate resourcing.

- Critical Entities Resilience Directive (CER Directive): This directive aims to strengthen the resilience of essential services, with the Board approving HIQA's potential role in ensuring healthcare providers meet resilience and risk management requirements, contingent upon clarity of roles, suitable legislation and adequate resources.
- The Health Information Bill 2024: This bill will establish a legal framework for managing health data in Ireland. HIQA is to play a significant role in health information governance as digital health initiatives are integrated.
- Human Tissue Bill 2024: This bill introduces new standards for certain pathology practices within hospital settings, with HIQA responsible for enforcing compliance related to consent processes for post-mortem examinations and the handling of human tissues.
- Sláintecare: This policy framework aims to transform the healthcare system into a more equitable model, with HIQA tasked with monitoring quality across newly established health regions and regulating homecare services.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The SDGs aim to end poverty and inequality, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy health, justice and prosperity. While a number of the goals are relevant to HIQA, Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) is of particular significance.



We acknowledge that various external factors can greatly influence HIQA’s programme of work and prioritisation process. Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders is crucial for ensuring that our Corporate Plan offers a comprehensive perspective and accurately reflects the broader health and social care landscape.

As part of the Corporate Plan development process, we conducted a scenario planning exercise to evaluate the upcoming changes and their potential impacts on HIQA. This involved examining strategic macro factors that could shape our long-term direction, tactical considerations for short-term delivery and our internal capabilities to prepare for future challenges. The exercise revealed that we are facing moderate to extensive changes, each affecting our operational framework. By exploring various future scenarios, we gained valuable insights into how evolving regulatory requirements, legislative updates, and shifts in health and social care dynamics may influence our work. This foresight has been crucial in guiding our

strategic priorities and ensuring we remain agile and responsive to emerging challenges.

Given the scale of change on the horizon and the rapidly evolving landscape of health and social care, this Corporate Plan outlines a clear direction and sets out the key considerations, dependencies and actions required to fulfil our mission for the future. It reflects our stage of development and organisational maturity and underscores our commitment to focusing on outcomes that enhance care quality and service user experiences. By strategically aligning our initiatives with evolving needs and regulatory expectations, we aim to foster a health and social care environment that prioritises safety, effectiveness, and respect for individual rights.

Section 3. HIQA's future strategic direction

3.1 Vision and Mission

Our Vision and Mission should be considered together. Our Vision sets out what we ultimately want to achieve, while our Mission defines our purpose and how we will go about achieving it.

VISION

Health and social care providers consistently deliver excellent standards of care and the best possible outcomes for service users

Our Vision emphasises the crucial role of HIQA in enabling health and social care providers to maintain consistently high standards of care and achieve the best possible outcomes for people using services. It highlights that public confidence in the health and social care system is directly tied to the dependability and excellence of the care provided. Crucially, it is dependent on making appropriate use of innovations to enhance the quality and efficiency of care services, including continuous improvement and innovation in care delivered. Essentially, the vision is to create an environment where every person receiving care can be assured that they will be treated with the utmost professionalism, compassion, and efficiency, thereby ensuring their wellbeing and satisfaction.

MISSION

To enable the best possible health and social care outcomes for all, through evidence-informed decision-making, standard setting, and regulation

Our Mission Statement highlights HIQA's commitment to improving the quality of health and social care services. Through working with our stakeholders, HIQA aims to ensure that all individuals receive the highest standards of care. This will be achieved by ensuring best-available evidence is provided to support decisions, setting high standards and assessing and reporting on the quality and safety of care provision. By focusing on these areas, the organisation strives to enhance the overall health and wellbeing of the community and support care providers to meet consistently excellent standards.

3.2 HIQA Values

HIQA's values guide the organisation, embodying its identity and principles. They shape how we do our business and how we engage with all internal and external stakeholders.



Human Rights

We believe in promoting and championing the rights and dignity of every individual interacting with the health and social care sectors. Practices should uphold human rights and create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected. This commitment reinforces HIQA's role in safeguarding these rights in all of our activities.

People-Centred

We value and respect the needs of both service users and staff. We support the delivery of services that meet the requirements of the people using them. Moreover, we foster an inclusive and supportive working environment that ensures that all voices are heard and considered.

Fair, Objective and Equitable

Our ways of working are objective, fair and proportionate, and decisions are informed by evidence. We believe in equitable treatment across the health and social care sectors and in integrity in regulatory practice.

Open and Accountable

We are transparent in our work and clearly communicate our processes, methodologies, and outcomes. Through being open and transparent, we foster public trust and encourage engagement with stakeholders and demonstrate accountability in our operations.

Excellence

We strive for the highest standards in all activities and continuously seek to innovate and improve our work. We believe that supporting excellence in our own work will ultimately benefit people using services.

Quality

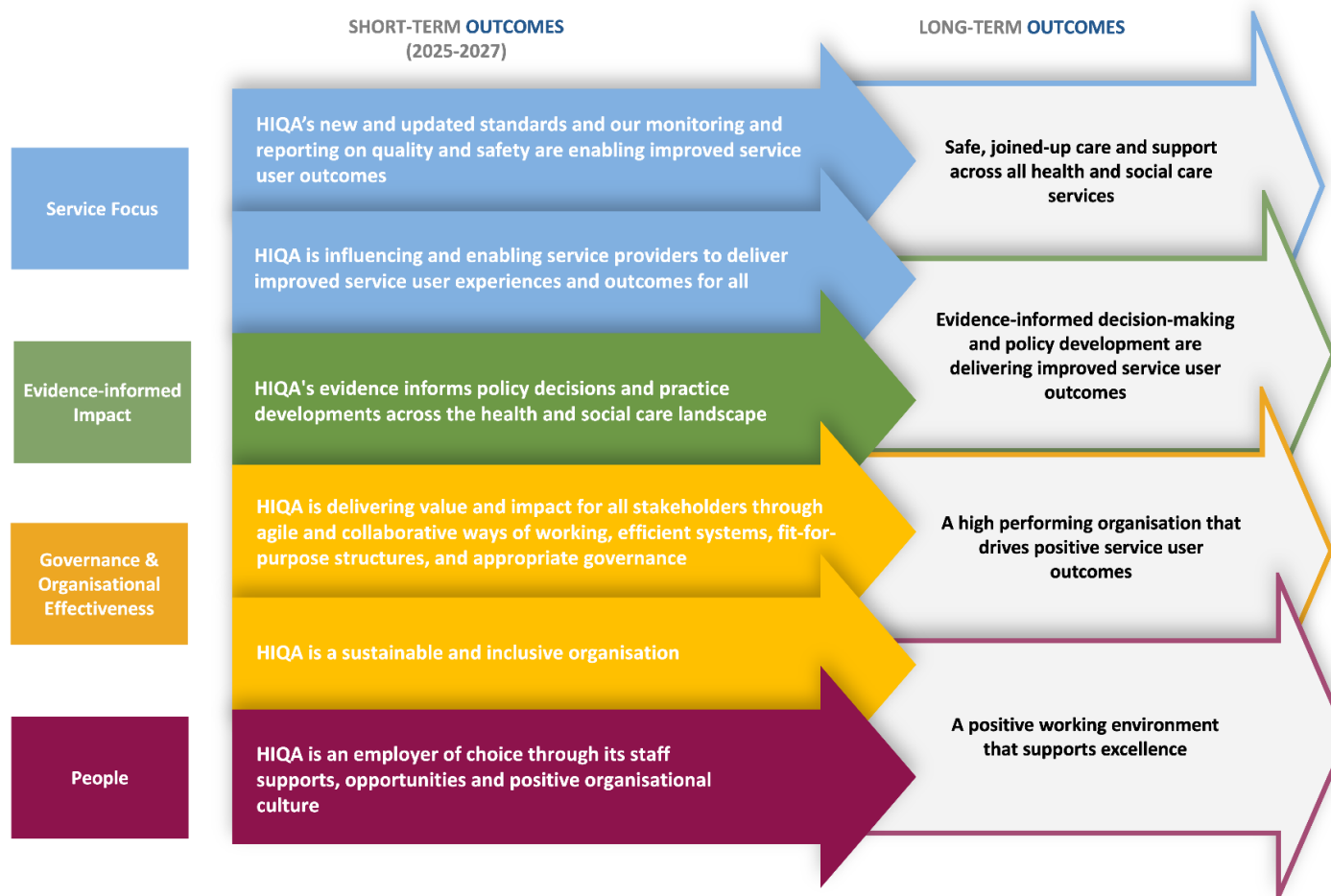
We focus on supporting ongoing quality improvement initiatives, thereby enhancing care delivery through a culture of learning and development. This commitment ensures that services evolve to meet the changing needs of individuals and communities.

Collaborative

We work in partnership with our colleagues and stakeholders, including service providers, government bodies, people using services and the public. We value shared expertise and partnerships. This collaborative approach enhances the effectiveness of initiatives and promotes joined-up thinking across the health and social care landscape.

3.3 Short-term and long-term outcomes

Our Corporate Plan is designed to foster continuous improvement, with a focus on delivering tangible outcomes in the shorter term, while keeping a clear view of our long-term aims. This Plan covers an initial three-year period, but it is also essential to have a clear understanding of HIQA’s long-term strategic objectives. By outlining short-term and long-term outcomes, we demonstrate our commitment to a clear progression over time, with each phase building on the last and bringing us closer to realising HIQA’s vision.



3.3.1 Long-term outcomes

Achieving our Vision requires us to deliver these four long-term outcomes:



Safe, joined-up care and support across all health and social care services

- We promote the delivery of services in a safe and consistent manner across the country, regardless of setting or location.
- We highlight system issues proactively while simultaneously supporting providers to deliver higher standards of care.

Evidence-informed decision-making and policy development are delivering improved service user outcomes

- Our evidence and expertise is key to informing and influencing significant developments within the broader health and social care policy and healthcare delivery landscape.
- We use our independence and trusted voice to forge strong relationships with all key stakeholders to improve outcomes for people using services.

A high performing organisation that drives positive service user outcomes

- We are an agile and adaptive organisation capable of quickly shifting focus to new and upcoming areas, depending on societal need and requirements.
- We are a sustainable, diverse and inclusive organisation.

A positive working environment that supports excellence

- Our staff are actively supported to succeed.
- We are recognised as an employer of choice for staff wanting to excel in their area of expertise.

3.3.2 Short-term outcomes (2025–2027)

We have identified short-term outcomes that we want to achieve by the end of this three-years planning cycle.



HIQA's new and updated standards and our monitoring and reporting on quality and safety are enabling improved service user outcomes

HIQA will develop and update various standards including addressing the requirements of the Health Information Bill 2024, Patient Safety (Notifiable Incidents and Open Disclosure) Act 2023, Human Tissue Bill 2024, and the NIS-2 Directive. Supported by thorough monitoring, these efforts aim to ensure higher care standards for people using services.

HIQA is influencing and enabling service providers to deliver improved service user experiences and outcomes for all

Through our regulatory guidance and support, HIQA will enable service providers to enhance their practices, ultimately resulting in better experiences and outcomes for all service users.

HIQA provides evidence to inform policy decisions and practice developments across the health and social care landscape

By supporting evidence-based approaches, HIQA will help ensure that health and social care policies and healthcare service decision-making can be grounded in evidence and best practices, leading to more effective interventions and improvements in care delivery.

HIQA is delivering value and impact for all stakeholders through agile and collaborative ways of working, efficient systems, fit-for-purpose structures, and appropriate governance

By working collaboratively and in partnership with stakeholders while maintaining our independence, HIQA aims to enhance communication and trust and continuously improve our ways of working. Our aim is that this will result in meaningful value and impact for all stakeholders and improved service delivery and better outcomes for people using services across the health and social care sector.

HIQA is a sustainable and inclusive organisation

Our focus on sustainability and inclusivity allows us to reflect the diverse needs of the communities served, ensuring long-term effectiveness in our operations.

HIQA is an employer of choice through its staff supports, opportunities and positive organisational culture

By investing in staff development and creating a supportive work environment, HIQA will be an employer of choice, fostering a motivated workforce that contributes to our mission and the overall improvement of health and social care services.

Section 4. Resources

HIQA receives annual funding from the Department of Health and collects application fees for the registration of designated centres. In addition, a number of grants have been awarded to HIQA and we may apply for additional grants in the future to undertake work aligned to our mission.

The availability of adequate human and financial resources is a prerequisite for the successful delivery of this plan and the achievement of the short-term outcomes set out in this Plan. HIQA commits to optimising the use of these resources to deliver on our Vision and Mission. This Corporate Plan has been developed on the basis of a number of assumptions, which include the following:

- The expansion of our remit will occur on a phased basis with sufficient time and additional resourcing provided to prepare for such work streams, including the supports required within our organisation.
- Additional resources, where required, will be put in place to support unplanned activities.
- Consideration of and response to sanction requests for staff will be timely.
- The Exchequer funding awarded to HIQA over the coming three years will adjust in line with changes to public sector pay scales and general operating costs.

Section 5. Implementation and monitoring

The implementation of this Corporate Plan will be monitored and reviewed by HIQA’s Board and Executive Management Team. In addition, a performance delivery agreement is in place between HIQA and the Department of Health, which includes processes for monitoring performance.

The short-term outcomes set out in this plan, together with Government priorities and external challenges, will inform HIQA’s annual business plans. The delivery of these business plans will ensure that our outcomes are achieved over the life span of this Corporate Plan. However, should HIQA be required to undertake a significant unplanned stream of work, it may require a re-evaluation of our priorities within the plan.

Appendix: Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, HIQA has a duty to assess human rights and equality issues relevant to our functions and purpose. This responsibility encompasses identifying the structures and initiatives in place to support human rights and equality while prioritising areas for action. As part of this Corporate Plan, HIQA is required to set out an assessment of human rights and equality issues and address them in our policies, plans, and actions in a manner accessible to the public, ensuring transparency and accountability in our operations.

During the corporate planning process, we thoroughly assessed our current policies and practices to ensure they aligned with our commitment to promoting human rights, diversity and equality. This assessment involved a comprehensive review of our values and mission, along with an examination of human resources, diversity, and inclusion efforts, as well as the needs of people using services. We engaged with a variety of stakeholders to gather insights and ensure that diverse perspectives informed our approach.

Specifically, we examined several key areas critical to upholding human rights and equality within our regulatory framework, including the regulation of health and social care services, monitoring and inspection practices, and efforts to promote quality and safety. From this, we identified opportunities for improvement and to align our strategic priorities to promote human rights, equality, and the integrity of health and social care services in Ireland:

- **Focus on outcomes:** We must prioritise measuring the real-world impact of our regulatory activities, shifting from merely tracking outputs to understanding how our actions promote human rights and safer and better care to improve care quality. We will continue to gather qualitative feedback from people using services to ensure their experiences inform our strategies.
- **Policy development:** There is a need to enhance our role in informing policy development by actively identifying systemic issues through our findings. By doing so, we can contribute to the formation of effective policies that align with human rights and equality standards.
- **Integration of human rights and equality in practices:** We should ensure that our regulatory frameworks continue to reflect commitment to human rights and equality. This involves integrating these principles into our monitoring and inspection practices to guarantee that all services uphold these values.

- **Workforce diversity and staff engagement:** Strengthening our focus on diversity within our workforce is essential to reflect the communities we serve. Recognising the importance of staff behaviours in upholding human rights and equality is key to fostering a supportive and inclusive internal culture. Engaging staff at all levels in meaningful discussions about human rights will ensure that these values are not only understood, but actively integrated into our everyday actions. This approach will enrich our regulatory practices by embedding diverse perspectives into decision-making processes, enhancing our ability to deliver equitable outcomes.

HIQA's core function is to promote safer and better care across health and social care services, which includes promoting high standards in health and social care services. Over the course of this Corporate Plan, we will focus on enhancing our regulatory frameworks and practices to better support human rights and equality. This will include implementing strategies that ensure diverse perspectives inform our work, actively engaging with stakeholders, and continuously improving our processes to uphold the integrity of the services we regulate.



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Published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

For further information please contact:

Health Information and Quality Authority
George's Court
George's Lane
Smithfield
Dublin 7
D07 E98Y