



Introduction

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 health and social care services in Ireland. HIQA recognises the importance of increasing the quality, safety and coordination of care and support for people when they are using home support services.

The Department of Health is progressing the development of a regulatory framework and licencing system for home support providers, with the aim of ensuring that people using services are provided with high-quality care. The regulatory framework is still draft, but is expected to comprise:

- Primary legislation for the licensing of public and private home support providers - currently in development as the Draft Health (Amendment) (Licensing of Professional Home Support Providers) Bill 2024 ¹
- Secondary legislation for providers of home support services (Regulations)
- National Standards for Home Support Services, developed by HIQA.

Under the existing Health Act 2007, HIQA has a remit to set standards on safety and quality in relation to home support services, where the service is either provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE) or where the service is provided under a Section 38 or Section 39 arrangement. Once the Health (Amendment) (Licensing of Professional Home Support Providers) Bill 2024 is passed into law and commenced, it will amend the Health Act to broaden the scope of HIQA's standard-setting function to include home support providers as defined in the legislation. The draft national standards have been developed in line with the scope set out in this draft

1 General Scheme of the Health (Amendment) (Licensing of Professional Home Support Providers) Bill 2024. Published in May 2024 by the Available on DOH website here: [https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a3ef4-general-scheme-of-the-health-amendment-licensing-of-professional-home-support-providers-bill-2024/#:~:text=The%20Health%20\(Amendment\)\(Licensing,incorporating%20transitional%20arrangements%20for%20existing](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a3ef4-general-scheme-of-the-health-amendment-licensing-of-professional-home-support-providers-bill-2024/#:~:text=The%20Health%20(Amendment)(Licensing,incorporating%20transitional%20arrangements%20for%20existing)

home support legislation which includes public, private for-profit and not-for-profit providers of home support services for adults over the age of 18. The standards have been developed using wide evidence review and stakeholder engagement with all services in mind.

This approach aims to provide the previously unregulated home support sector with the opportunity to become familiar with the standards and adopt the standards voluntarily, which will help to promote readiness in the sector.

Purpose of the draft standards

The draft *National Standards for Home Support Services* aim to promote progressive quality improvements in home support services and give a shared voice to the expectations of the public, people using services, caregivers, service providers and staff. The draft national standards are underpinned by four principles, which can be used by all organisations who provide home support services to achieve person-centred care and support.

These four principles are:

- a Human Rights-based Approach
- Safety and Wellbeing
- Responsiveness
- Accountability.

National standards are a set of high-level outcomes that describe how services can achieve safe, quality, person-centred care and support. They are evidence-based and informed by engaging with those who use and provide health and social care services. Standards describe what high-quality, safe, consistent and coordinated home support services for people should look like.

How you can contribute to the draft *National Standards for Home Support Services*

As part of the development of the draft *National Standards for Home Support Services*, HIQA engages with a wide range of stakeholders at key points of the project to ensure that the standards are fit for purpose and will contribute to improvements in the provision of home support services. To make the standards more accessible and enable greater engagement and feedback from all stakeholders, we have also developed an easy-to-read version of the standards and an easy-to-read feedback form. This easy-to-read version is available on the HIQA website alongside the draft national standards ([here](#)).

HIQA is now undertaking a six-week public consultation to inform the development of the draft *National Standards for Home Support Services*. The aim of the public consultation is to offer members of the public, caregivers, families using services,

those who receive care in the home, service providers, and staff working in home support services an opportunity to offer their feedback on the content, structure, and language of the draft national standards. Additional questions in the public consultation aim to understand how these standards can be put into practice in home support services.

We welcome your feedback on each of the sections in the draft national standards on or before **5pm on Friday 13 December 2024**. The consultation feedback forms for both the draft national standards and the easy-to-read version are available [online](#) or in PDF format.

The fastest way to provide your feedback is to complete the online questionnaire, which can be accessed [here](#). Your comments can also be submitted by downloading and completing the consultation feedback form, which can be accessed [here](#) and then emailing your completed form to standards@hiqa.ie

Alternatively, you can fill out and post the completed form to:

Health Information and Quality Authority
Public consultation on Home Support Services
Dublin Regional Office
George's Court, George's Lane
Smithfield, Dublin, D07 E98Y

If you require any further information please contact the HIQA Standards Team by emailing standards@hiqa.ie

We will carefully assess all feedback received and use it, along with other available evidence, to develop the draft national standards. At the end of this public consultation, your comments will be collated and used to help inform the development of the draft national standards. HIQA will also be running focus groups to further inform the development of these standards.