

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

29 January 2025, 10.30am – 2pm
Boardroom, Dublin

Present:

Name	Details	Initials
Pat O'Mahony	Chairperson	POM
Bernadette Costello	Board Member	BC
Caroline Spillane	Board Member	CS
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
Finbarr Colfer*	Chief Inspector Designate ¹	FC
Sean Egan*	Director of Healthcare Regulation	SE
Sean Angland*	Acting Chief Operations Officer	SA
Marian Brady*	Financial Planning Analysis and Reporting Officer	MB
Susan Montgomery*	Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development	SM
Karen Egan	Board Secretary	KE
Rachel O'Connor	Board and Committee Executive	RC
Sean Lynch	Corporate Reporting Officer	SL

*Joined for part of the meeting

Apologies:

Name	Details	Initials
Clíodhna Foley-Nolan	Board Member	CFN

1.0 Quorum

¹ Designated Inspector of Social Services to perform the functions of the Chief Inspector of Social Services.

The Chairperson welcomed Board members to the meeting. A quorum was present and the meeting was duly convened. The Chairperson advised that a Board-only session had been scheduled to discuss the CEO end-year performance review.

1.1 Board Only Session

CEO PMDS

LP, Chair of the Resource Oversight Committee (ROC), reported to the Board that she and POM had recently met with the CEO to undertake the end-year review of CEO performance.

LP provided an update on the meeting and noted that it had been a very constructive conversation. She advised that the meeting had provided an opportunity to reflect on the achievements, progress made, and challenges faced by AF during the course of 2024. Particular attention was drawn to the leadership shown by AF on the DER project. In terms of 2025 objectives, LP advised that succession planning in the organisation and the progress made on filling the new Director post had been discussed.

The Board was advised that AF had expressed appreciation for the support she received from the Board and Committees during the year and how much value she received from these relationships. AF will revert in coming weeks with her 2025 PMDS plan and objectives.

Upcoming Board Vacancies

The Board discussed the upcoming HIQA Board vacancies arising in 2025 and 2026 and noted that the Chairperson and Board Secretary had been liaising with the Department of Health on this, including on the arrangements for undertaking a Board appointment process with the Public Appointments Service.

The Chair noted that diversity and gender balance are important considerations for Boards and these were primarily a matter for the appointing Minister.

AF and SL joined the meeting at this point.

2.0 Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3.0 Board Minutes – 27 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 27 November 2024 were reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of the meeting. MM proposed approval of the minutes and MOH seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that the minutes of 27 November 2024 be approved by the Board.**

3.1 Committee Coordination Group Minutes - 27 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 27 November 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 BC seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that the minutes of the Committee Coordination Group meeting on 27 November 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

AF updated the Board on the impact of Storm Éowyn, particularly on the Galway office and staff members in the West. She advised that contingency planning for these types of events will be examined as part of business contingency planning.

7.0 Health and Safety Matters

AF advised that there were no Health and Safety matters to bring to the Board for discussion.

8.0 Board Committee Report

Regulation Committee – 16 January 2025

MOH, Chair of the Regulation Committee, advised that the Committee had reviewed the following items in detail the 16 January 2025 meeting:

- An update on the Networks and Integration Security Directive (NIS-2)
- A Report from the Chief Inspector
- A Report from the Director of Healthcare Regulation, including an update on the Mid-West Review, the CHI review and IPAS
- The Terms of Reference for the Regulation Committee were reviewed and recommended for the approval of the Board
- An update on Corporate Performance and Risks in Regulation Healthcare and Social Services was provided to the Committee. It had been noted by the Committee that some of the risk ratings continued to be high and the Chief Risk Officer would liaise with the Directorates regarding review and calibration of the risks.

Audit, Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC) – 21 January 2025

BC, Chair of the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee reported that the following items were reviewed in detail at the ARGC meeting on 21 January 2025:

- Progress updates on the 2024 and 2025 Internal Audit Plans
- Reports on the DER Programme Review and the Follow-up IA review were presented. The ARGC had welcomed the finding of substantial assurance for the DER Governance review
- A report on Internal Audit Recommendations was provided by the Head of Quality, Risk and Compliance
- The 2024 Checklist for the Effectiveness of Audit and Risk Committee was discussed
- The ARGC Annual Work Plan 2025 was noted

- An update on Risk Management and Internal Audit Recommendations in the Information Directorate was presented by the Chief Information Officer
- An update on DER Finances was noted
- A verbal update on Lobbying legislation was provided - a paper is to be brought to the March meeting
- A Report on the Statutory Compliance review was noted
- The updated Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and SOP were reviewed and recommended to Board for approval
- The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference for the ARGC and recommended them to the Board for approval
- A Paper on Fee Income was presented
- The Corporate Risk Report was presented by the Head of Quality, Risk and Compliance. Corporate risks were reviewed by the Committee. No new risks were brought to the attention of the Committee.

Standards, Information, Research and Technology Committee (SIRT) – 22 January 2025

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

- QAF and Work plan for Health Information Standards were reviewed and recommended for approval by the Board
- QAF and Work plan for 2025-2027 for Health and Social Care Standards were reviewed and recommended for approval by the Board
- The prioritisation process for core HTA work plan was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Board
- The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference for the SIRT Committee and recommended them for approval by the Board
- An update on the NIAC transition was provided
- An update on the Mid West Review was provided the potential displacement effect of unplanned reviews of this nature on core HTA work was noted

LC noted the high-quality of the presentations at the SIRT committee and that they would usefully be shared with the whole Board for information.

Resource Oversight Committee (ROC) – 23 January 2025

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:

- A Committee-only session to discuss the CEO performance review
- Updates on Corporate Performance and Risk Management in the HR, ID, and Communications Directorates
- An update on DER, including finances and risks
- [REDACTED]
- The satisfactory resolution of the third escalation was noted which included an updated ways of working agreement to support continued performance under the contract and early escalation of issues
- A report on Human Capital was provided, including an update on implementation of the Culture Framework, and delivery of the competency framework

- The Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference for the ROC and recommended them for approval by the Board
- An update on the Digital and Data Transformation Strategy Development and a Standing Report on PMO Projects.

9.0 CEO's Report

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

AF highlighted the following from her report:

Quality, Risk and Compliance

- The two-yearly Review of Statutory Compliance was completed in January 2025 and the report was presented to the ARGC and Board in January 2025.
- An update on delivery of the 2024 and 2025 Internal Audit Plans was provided.

Strategic HR Issues

- HIQA achieved and maintained the Platinum Status in the Excellence Through People assessment.
- An update on the Strategic Workforce Plan was provided, including progress on sanction of prioritised roles and funding confirmation for 2025.

Healthcare Regulation — Strategic Developments

- Since the commencement of the Patient Safety (Open Disclosure and Notifiable Incidents) Act in September 2024, the Healthcare Directorate had published a suite of regulatory guidance to support the expansion of inspections into private hospitals and support incident notifications.
- Overall, the adoption of the HIQA inspection healthcare methodology in a private hospital setting had gone well.
- HIQA continues to receive notifications from public and private healthcare facilities for serious reportable events via the NIMS system in line with the provisions of the PSA; the number of reported maternity incidents including HIE incidents was noted.
- Recruitment for remaining priority positions within the Healthcare Directorate is included in the comprehensive workforce plan submitted to the Department of Health.

The Networks and Integration Security Directive (NIS-2)

- HIQA continues to engage with the Department of Health, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the National Cybersecurity Centre to address remaining issues to the satisfaction of HIQA's Board.
- Engagement with the HIQA Board will continue as these matters are progressed.

Palliative care regulation

- In September 2024, the Department of Health published a new national policy document for adult palliative care which included a recommendation that palliative care services be regulated. HIQA was identified as the appropriate agency to take on this role and remit, but no specific detail on the nature of the intended regulatory role for HIQA was set out.

- HIQA is engaging with the Department of Health regarding the nature of the proposed regulatory role, in the context of parallel demands being placed upon HIQA to assume other functions at this time.
- The Executive noted recent discussions at Board level where a mechanism for the full consideration of potential new areas of expansion will be developed. AF advised that that a process of deliberation will be required and that the necessary engagement with the Department in advance of any new work being assumed will be noted in the 2025 Business Plan.
- This matter will be brought back to the Board for further discussion at the appropriate time.

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

- The Healthcare Directorate continues to prepare for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) Mission in early 2026, and has commenced a project with multi-directorate expertise and oversight to progress preparations for this further in 2025.

Monitoring of International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS)

- There have been some changes in the number of individual centres which are designated by the Department as being within HIQA's remit. The total current number of centres under HIQA's remit is now 45 (a decrease of six over 2024).
- HIQA inspections found that there were accommodation centres which performed well against national standards; it was also noted that there was room for improvement in the majority of services inspected.
- With the restructuring of Government Departments, responsibility for IPAS will move to the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. The implications for the future role of HIQA in this matter will require consideration and will have regard to issues such as national policy direction and the EU Pact on Migration.

Health Information and Standards

- In 2024, the HIS Directorate commenced a review of all Quality Assurance Frameworks (QAFs) that support the work of the HIS Directorate to streamline processes within the QAFs and develop an annual plan for each of the functions.
- In order to enhance outputs as part of the EU Quantum and HealthData@IE EU project, a grant agreement has been put in place with UCC to co-deliver on some of HIQA's commitments.
- In October 2024, it was agreed that the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) will establish a tri-partite group with HIQA and Tusla to develop guidance for foster care to support the implementation of National Standards for Children's Social Services. A first draft of this guidance was discussed with DCEDIY in January 2025.
- A meeting with the Department of Health and HSE took place in December 2024 to discuss the scope and approach to the development of an ethical and safe use guidance framework for the use of AI in health and social care. A co-production approach, with the Department of Health and HSE as partners, will be progressed in early 2025.

Health Technology Assessment

AF noted that given the priority attaching to the Mid West Review and the associated timelines, the Public Health Policy Team had paused its work on the evidence to inform the updated national guidelines on low risk drinking to support the work on the Review as the team had been reassigned.

Mid-West Review

- The Mid-West Review was progressing well and within expected timelines.
- The six-week opportunity for members of the public to make submissions to inform the review closed on 15 January 2025, with 1,114 submissions received. A thematic analysis of the submissions was now underway.
- External dependencies include the completion by ESRI of the regional demand and capacity review.
- The second meeting of the Expert Advisory Group is scheduled for February 2025.

Update on National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) transition

AF provided an update on the transfer of NIAC to HIQA which is scheduled for 31 March 2025.

The Board acknowledged the professional and comprehensive approach taken by the staff in HIQA managing the process and noted the seamless nature of the transfer. The Board suggested that HIQA could use this experience to showcase learnings across the public sector on how the transfer of responsibilities can be achieved, and that a launch event could be held to mark the transfer of NIAC to HIQA.

Information Division Update

- An update was provided on the Data & Digital Transformation Strategy (DDTS) and the Business As Usual (BAU) project priorities.
- The steps taken to protect HIQA's information technology infrastructure ahead of Storm Éowyn were outlined.

The Board thanked AF for her comprehensive report.

PK and SE left the meeting at this point.

10.0 Chief Inspector's Report

FC, Chief Inspector Designate, provided an update on the Chief Inspector's activities and highlighted the following from the report:

Older Persons team

- At the end of 2024, there were 548 designated centres for older people, providing 32,370 registered places. These figures reflect a reduction of five in the number of nursing homes since the end of 2023, but an increase of 156 registered places.

- The registration of two nursing homes has been cancelled since the previous Board meeting, and the HSE has taken over the operation of the nursing homes under Section 64 of the Health Act 2007, as amended.

The Chief Inspector Designate updated the Board on the risk of the financial instability amongst a small number of nursing homes and provided some examples to the Board, noting the impact that this can have on the ability of a provider to continue to provide a safe service in the nursing home. In such situations, the Chief Inspector works with the provider and other State agencies, where possible, to facilitate arrangements for the continuity of care to residents.

The Board commended the work of the Older Person's team and asked that Older Person's Services be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting to allow time for a deeper discussion on the matter.

Disability Team

- The Disability Pillar continues to experience an increase in the number of designated centres and residential places. Since the start of 2024, there has been an increase of 78 centres, and there are currently 1,656 designated centres with 9,248 residential places.
- 2024 was the busiest year to date for registration activity, with 618 renewals of registration (almost doubling the number from 2022), 112 applications for new designated centres, and 347 applications to vary or remove conditions of registration.
- 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

- HIQA launched its 10 Years of Regulating and Monitoring Children's Social Care Services report in December 2024. The report showed how ongoing monitoring has positively impacted on the quality of services for children in care and in the community over the last ten years.
- The Governance Report on Child Protection and Welfare and the Inspection Report on Out of Hours Social Work Services have been published.
- The challenges facing Tusla in relation to the having sufficient staffing and a range of appropriate placements has impacted on children and resulted in delays providing services; however, Tusla has provided comprehensive plans to address governance issues and have plans for changes in how they deliver child protection services in 2025.

Court Proceedings

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

The Board thanked FC for his comprehensive report.

FC left the meeting at this point.

11.0 Corporate Plan

Sean Angland (SA), Acting Chief Operations Officer, joined the meeting at this point.

SA presented the draft Corporate Plan for the three year period from 2025-2027, and highlighted the following:

- The plan had been developed through consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and the general public
- The new Corporate Plan focuses on outcomes rather than outputs and HIQA's achievements of the outcomes will be measured.
- The updated Vision and Mission within the Corporate Plan captures HIQA's wide ranging role.

AF thanked SA and SL for their work on developing the Corporate Plan, and advised that the new Corporate Plan will require collective leadership from the EMT.

The Board commended the work done on developing the new Corporate Plan and thanked the HIQA corporate team and Prospectus Management Consultants for their work in developing the plan. The Board also welcomed the shift to an outcomes focused plan and the revised Vision and Mission.

MH proposed the approval of the Corporate Plan, subject to comments from the Board being adopted, and MOH seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was unanimously resolved that the Corporate Plan be approved by the Board.**

LP and DMcC left the meeting at this point.

12.0 CHI Update

AF provided a verbal update on the Children's Health Ireland (CHI) review and advised that the report was nearing completion and an assurance paper providing an overview of how the QAF was complied with on the CHI review would be brought to a future Board meeting once the due process was complete

The Board acknowledged the work of SE and his team in progressing this review.

13.0 DER status report

[REDACTED]

14.0 Finance Report

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

Marian Brady (MB), Financial Planning Analysis and Reporting officer, joined the meeting at this point.

BC introduced the Finance report to November 2024 and advised that the report had been discussed in detail at the recent ARGC meeting. She highlighted that as at November €26m in Exchequer Grant funding had had been drawn from the Department of Health, with a forecast to draw down €29.4m by the end of the year.

The Board thanked SA and MB for their ongoing work in the area and noted that public sector pay increases had been included in the baseline funding levels for 2025.

SA and MB left the meeting at this point.

14.1 Report on review of fee income

The Board noted the paper previously circulated.

BC advised that the matter had been discussed at the recent ARGC meeting and that the Committee had not recommended an increase in fees at this time.

The Board had an in-depth discussion on the matter and noted that the fee model is underpinned by statute as the Health Act 2007 provides for HIQA to make charges subject to the approval of the Minister of Health following consultation with the Minister for Finance.

The Board agreed that no fee increase would be sought at this time, but that the matter should be kept under regular review. It was also agreed to document the review and the outcome.

The Board asked that the Executive engages with the Department of Health to seek clarity on the current policy context with respect to the statutory fee model and its application to HIQA.

15.0 Human Capital Report

Susan Montgomery (SM), Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development, joined the meeting at this point. SM presented the Human Capital Report and highlighted the following:

- An overview of headcount and recruitment in the organisation, including competition data for 2024
- The importance of the induction process and the time allocated to this by managers.
- An overview of the activities of the HR Ops team in 2024
- Corporate L&D Metrics for 2024
- An update on the Excellence Through People re-accreditation at the 'Platinum' rating for 2025-2027
- An update on the HIQA Wellbeing Programme.

The Board acknowledged the significant work carried out during 2024 by SM and her team on a comprehensive programme of work including recruitment, the culture review, blended work and the Wellbeing Programme. They also commended the team on the retention of the Platinum award following the Excellence through People re-assessment.

SM left the meeting at this point.

16.0 Strategic discussion on Digital and Data Strategy Development

The Board noted the papers previously circulated and the progress made on the new DDTS. It is intended to bring the draft DDTS to the March Board meeting.

17.0 Transactions for Approval

[REDACTED]

18.0 Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption SOP and Policy

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

The Board asked that approval of the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and SOP be deferred to allow the Executive to further clarify the references to HIQA's Disciplinary and Grievance procedures. They advised that the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption SOP and Policy should be re-presented for approval at the next Board meeting.

19.0 Board work plan 2025 and Policy Review

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

POM proposed the approval of the Board Work Plan 2025 and Policy Review and MH seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was unanimously resolved that the Board Work Plan 2025 and Policy Review be approved by the Board.**

20.0 Committee Terms of Reference

The Board noted the papers previously circulated and noted that there would be further opportunity to review and consider further updates to the Committee Terms of Reference at the twice-yearly meetings of the Committee Coordination group.

BC proposed the approval of the updated Committee Terms of Reference and MH seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was unanimously resolved that the updated Committee Terms of Reference be approved by the Board.**

21.0 QAF and Work Plan for Health Information Standards Function

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

MOH proposed the approval of the Quality Assurance Framework and Annual Work plan for 2025 for the Health Information Standards function and MM seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that the Quality Assurance Framework and Annual Work plan for 2025 for the Health Information Standards function be approved by the Board.**

22.0 QAF and Work plan for National Standards for Health and Social Care function

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

MOH proposed the approval of the Quality Assurance Framework and Work plan for National Standards for Health and Social Care function and MM seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that the Quality Assurance Framework and Work plan for National Standards for Health and Social Care function be approved by the Board.**

23.0 Prioritisation process for core HTA work plan

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

MOH proposed the approval of the revisions to the prioritisation process for the core HTA work plan and MM seconded the proposal; **accordingly, it was resolved that the revised prioritisation process for the core HTA work plan be approved by the Board.**

24.0 Chairperson's Report

The Board noted the Report previously circulated.

25.0 Statutory Compliance Report

The Board noted the papers previously circulated.

26.0 Any other business

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 2pm.

Signed



Pat O'Mahony
Chairperson



Karen Egan
Board Secretary

Actions arising from Board meeting – 29 January 2025

No	Action	Person Responsible	Timeframe
1	SIRT Committee presentations to be shared with the whole Board for information where appropriate.	KE	On an ongoing basis
2	Palliative care regulation to be brought back to the Board for further discussion at the appropriate time.	SE	At appropriate time
3	Consideration to be given to a launch event to mark the transfer of NIAC to HIQA.	MR	March 2025
4	Older Person's Services be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting.	KE	March 2025 Board meeting
5	Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption SOP and Policy to be re-presented for approval at the next Board meeting.	ED	March 2025 Board meeting
6	Corporate Plan to be amended to reflect the Board's comments, and then submitted to the Minister for Health.	AF/SA	February 2025
7	Executive to engage with the Department of Health to seek clarity on the statutory fee model and its application to HIQA. Fee paper to be updated accordingly. Fee income to be kept under review. Review and outcome to be documented.	AF/SA	Following meeting
Actions carried forward from previous meetings		Person Responsible	Timeframe
8	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	Q1 2025
9	The next six-monthly review of risk management to include a review of risk appetite and risk profiles against other regulators.	ED	May 2025 Board meeting
10	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
11	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
12	Show percentage of training/education days against the overall number of working days.	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