



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Draft National Quality Standards for Residential and Foster Care Services for Children and Young People

Tell us what you think

20 January 2010



Safer Better Care

What is the Health Information and Quality Authority?

The Health Information and Quality Authority is the independent organisation set up by law in charge of improving health services and social care services in Ireland.

Social care services include residential and foster care services for children. The law which set up the Authority is called the Health Act, 2007. We are an independent organisation and we report directly to the Minister for Health and Children.

The reason the Authority was set up was to make health and social care services safer and better for people in Ireland. We are responsible for services that are provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE), voluntary organisations and private companies.

Words that have special meanings in the context of children's social care services are explained on the next page.



Abuse: A situation where you are treated badly.

Children detention schools: A place of detention for children aged under 16 who commit a crime.

Children’s residential centres: Places where children and young people who are in care live.

Designated centre: This is the term used in law to describe a place where children and young people in care live.

Children’s residential services and residential centres for children with disabilities are described as “designated centres”.

Foster care services: When children and young people can’t live with their families, the Government will sometimes ask a foster family to look after them.

Hostels for homeless children and young people: Short-term accommodation for children and young people who are homeless.

Inspection: When inspectors visit the residential or foster care service to make sure that the service is safe and that the children and young people using it are happy and well cared for.

Registration: To be registered, a service for children and young people must show inspectors that it is safe and that the people who use it are happy and well cared for.

Residential and respite centres for children with disabilities: Centres where children and young people with disabilities live for a short time when they can’t live at home with their families.

Special care units: Centres for children and young people who have to be detained for their own protection.

Standards: Standards state how residential and foster care services should be run. Services must follow these standards to make sure you are well cared for.

How can I have my say?

We are publishing the draft standards so that anyone who has an interest in children's residential services and foster care services can give their views on them.

The public consultation will be from 8 February 2010 to 31 March 2010.

After the consultation, we will look at what people have said about the draft standards and we will finish work on them.

We hope to publish the final standards in mid-2010.

We think it's very important to hear what you have to say.

We would like to hear what you think about the standards, whether or not they are easy to understand or if there are parts of them you think should be changed.

There are two (2) ways to tell us what you think:



You can download a feedback form from www.hiqa.ie and email it back to us at consultation@hiqa.ie

OR

You can print off the feedback form from our website, www.hiqa.ie and post it back to us at this address:



Health Information and Quality Authority
Children's Consultation
George's Court, George's Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7



If you have any questions about the draft standards, you can talk to either **Andrew Fagan** or **Sarah Murphy** by calling (01) 8147400

Why are these Standards important?

These standards are called the *Draft National Quality Standards for Residential and Foster Care Services for Children and Young People*.

The Government's *National Children's Strategy* (2000) says that children and young people should be respected as citizens of Ireland and that it is important that they are cherished and supported by family and society to help them realise their full potential. The draft standards are part of our work to achieving a better and safer future for children and young people.

Depending on their particular needs, some children and young people, including those with disabilities, may live in residential centres, foster homes, special care units or children detention centres.

It is important that children and young people in these settings receive care and support that is safe and of a high standard.

Part of making sure that children and young people are safe is to let them know what to expect in a residential centre or a foster home. These standards clearly say what children and young people should expect when they are cared for away from their own family.

A full copy of the standards, along with an electronic version of this document, is online at www.hiqa.ie



Why were these Standards developed?

The Health Act, 2007 is the law or set of laws (also known as legislation) that gives the Authority the power to do its work in health and social care settings.

Services that need to be registered in order to operate are:

- » children's residential centres
- » special care units
- » residential and residential respite centres for children with disabilities.

Services that will be inspected but will not be registered are:

- » foster care services
- » children detention schools

At the moment, there are four (4) separate sets of standards for children and young people in care. We have developed these draft standards as a single set of standards because we believe that all children, no matter where they receive care and support, have the same rights and needs.

Under law, the term “designated centre” is used to refer to residential services for children in the care of the Health Services Executive (HSE) and residential services for children with disabilities.



How were these Standards developed?

An important part of our work is including and working with experts, people who have relevant personal experience and people who use health and social care services.

When we started developing these draft standards, we asked an independent group of experts to help us. This group was called our Standards Advisory Group. The group included:

- » young people themselves
- » people from organisations who work directly with children and young people
- » advocates and representatives for young people
- » professional carers, social workers and social care providers
- » people from the HSE
- » people from the Department of Health and Children
- » people from the Irish Youth Justice Service.

When we have finished our work, the standards will be approved by the Board of the Authority and then sent to the Minister for Health and Children.

What principles inform the Standards?

On its own, no standard can ensure a safer, better, outcome for children or young people. All the standards work together and should be read and understood in that way.

For example, good care is safe care. When we think about what makes a service safe (or safer) for the children and young people who use it, it is important to remember that things like having strong and trusting relationships with the adults in their lives is important. So too is being happy and healthy. Together, Standards 1 and 4 state why these factors are important.

The draft national standards are based on these ten (10) key principles:

Principle 1: the needs and interests of children and young people should come first in deciding how services are provided.

Principle 2: children and young people have to have adults who are there for them.

Principle 3: the rights of children and young people should be respected and promoted.

Principle 4: children and young people should have the chance to grow up in a family.



- Principle 5:** children and young people should only live apart from their own family when there is no other way of making sure they are safe and well.
- Principle 6:** children and young people who live apart from their family should have a life that's just like that of any other child or young person.
- Principle 7:** children and young people should also be given support in their early adult years so that they can reach their full potential.
- Principle 8:** children and young people who live apart from their family should have happy and carefree lives.
- Principle 9:** children and young people who live away from their family should be safe, and protected from any form of abuse.
- Principle 10:** services for children and young people should be managed and run in a way that fits with these principles.



What do the Standards mean for you?

The standards are broken down into seven (7) sections. The information below tells you what each standard says and what it means.

1. Quality of Life

You should be...

- » happy and well
- » given the chance to be independent
- » be treated with respect
- » be able to have contact with the people who are important to you
- » know what's going to happen every day.

2. Children and Young People's Rights

You should...

- » be given information on your rights in a way you can understand it
- » have the chance to be involved in making decisions about your life
- » be able to complain if you are not happy.

3. Keeping Children and Young People Safe and Protected

- » you should be safe, and protected from all types of abuse.

4. Professional Staff and Foster Parents

- » you should be cared for by people who understand your needs and can support you.

5. Education, Health and Social Development

You should...

- » be involved in planning your care
- » be in a service that meets your needs
- » be helped to prepare for the adult life you want
- » get special help to deal with situations that upset you or make you sad
- » be helped to be healthy
- » be helped and supported to get a good education.

6. The Physical Environment

- » you should live in a safe place that's homely and suitable for you.

7. Governance and Management

You should be in a service that...

- » makes sure you have the chance to meet your goals
- » only keeps records and information about you that helps staff give you the support you need
- » puts in writing what it provides so that you know what to expect.



What do you think?

We would like to hear what you think about the draft standards. You can comment on one of the draft standards, on all of them, or you may want to make a general comment.

If your comment is about a particular standard, please include the number of the standard with your comment.

Some questions that might help you tell us what you think are in the box below:

1. Are the standards easy to understand?
2. We state what principles inform the standards. Do you think there are other principles that should be included?
3. Are the standards in the right order?
4. Are there other things that should be included in the standards?
5. Do you have comments on specific standards? (please give the number of the standard you are commenting on)
6. How do you think the standards will help to improve the safety and quality of residential and foster care services provided for children?

To tell us what you think, you can send us your comments in writing by either emailing us at **consultation@hiqa.ie** or by posting them to:

Health Information and Quality Authority
Children's Consultation
George's Court
George's Lane
Smithfield,
Dublin 7

**The closing date for
consultation is 31 March 2010.**





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