

Draft Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services



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. The Mental Health Commission (MHC) has a statutory mandate under the Mental Health Act 2001 to promote, encourage and foster the establishment and maintenance of high standards and good practices in the delivery of mental health services. HIQA and the MHC recognise the importance of increasing the quality, safety, and coordination of care and support for all children when they are using health and social care services provided by statutory agencies as well as by private and voluntary service providers. As such, HIQA and the MHC are developing *Draft Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services* to support all health and social care services working with children including hospital services, disability services, mental health services, children's social services, general practitioner (GP), and primary care services, to deliver high-quality, safe, consistent and coordinated care and support to children.

Purpose of the draft standards

The Draft Overarching National Children's Standards aim to promote high-quality and safe care and support for children using health and social care services and progressive quality improvements in that care and support. By providing a common framework for all health and social care services working with children, the overarching standards aim to promote clarity, consistency and continuity within and between services to ensure that no matter what health or social care services a child

is using, that there is a consistent and coordinated response to their needs and that services will work in an integrated way to improve the experience and outcomes of children using these services. The standards cover all health and social care services working with children, including:

- hospitals
- residential and community mental health services
- residential and community services for children with disabilities
- children's social services and
- GP and primary care services.

The draft national standards are underpinned by four principles which can be used by all health and social care services caring for and supporting children to achieve child-centred care and support. These four principles are:

- a children's rights-based approach
- safety and wellbeing
- responsiveness
- accountability.

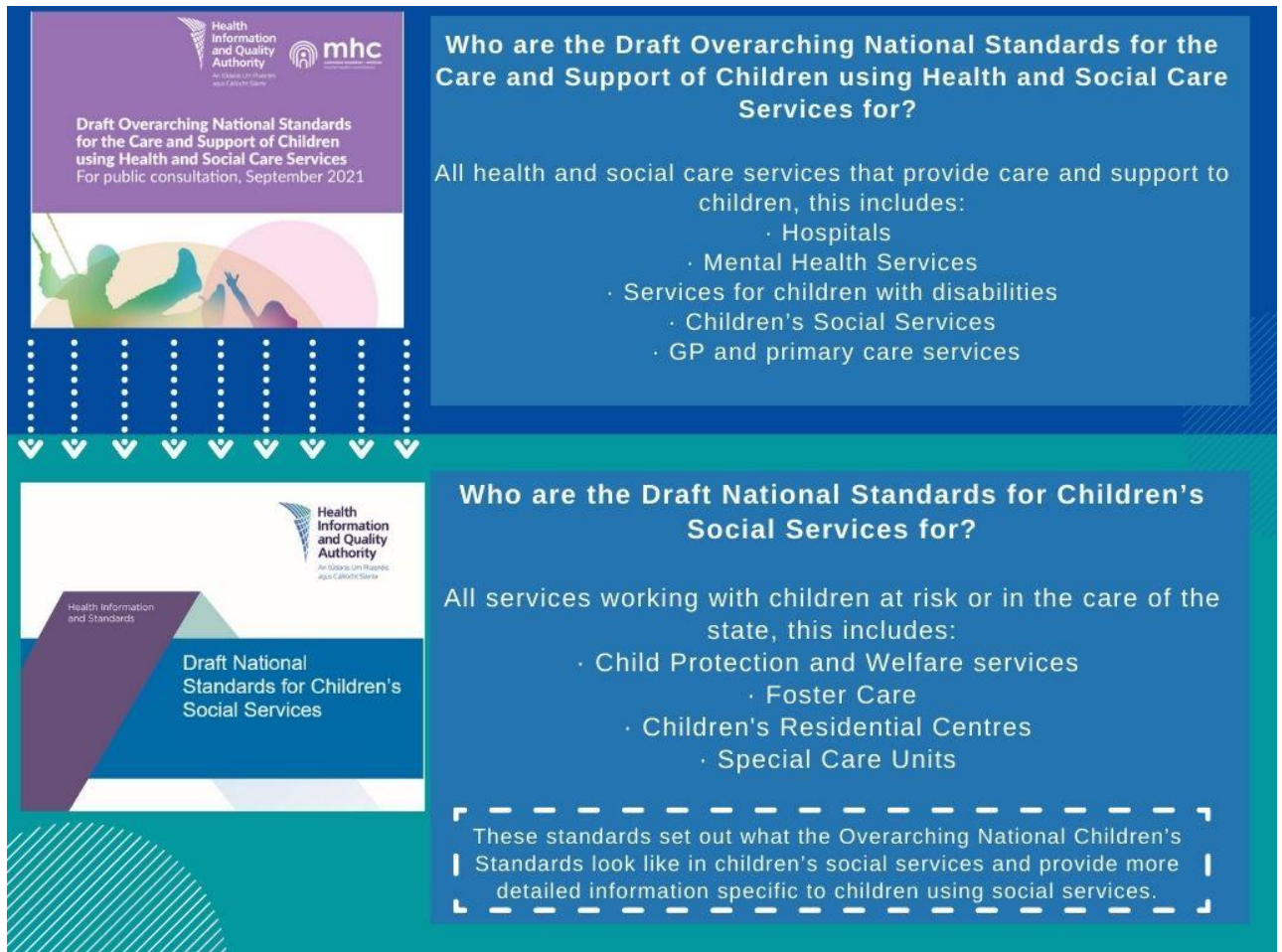
The draft standards set out what outcomes a child should expect and what a service needs to do to achieve these outcomes. Taken together, the principles, standard statements, and the features of a good service, provide a common language to describe what high-quality, safe, consistent and coordinated health and social care services for children should look like. There are two main organisations responsible for organising health and social care services that work with children; these are the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Child and Family Agency (Tusla), in addition to private and voluntary service providers. These overarching standards will support organisations and services to work together in a coordinated and integrated way to improve the experience and outcomes of children and their families.

HIQA and the MHC recognise the complexities of health and social care services and the challenges faced by services and staff in driving and sustaining improvements in these settings. While national standards are an important component that will improve consistency and continuity of care and support for children, in order for the standards to be effective, national policy and structures to support effective interagency working, strategic planning at the national level in relation to workforce development, and strategic investment in resources will also be required.

Relationship between the Draft Overarching National Children's Standards and the Draft National Standards for Children's Social Services

It is envisioned that the Draft Overarching National Children's Standards will provide an overarching framework that will inform the development of specific standards, guidance or implementation support tools, for individual settings if this is required in

the future. For example, in parallel with the development of the overarching standards, HIQA is also developing National Standards for Children’s Social Services. These will be aligned to and sit underneath these Draft Overarching National Children’s Standards. See graphic below.



How you can contribute to the Draft Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services

As part of the development of the Draft Overarching National Children’s Standards, HIQA and the MHC engage 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 the improvement of health and social care services that work with children.

HIQA and the MHC are now undertaking a six-week public consultation to inform the development of the Draft Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services. The aim of the public consultation is to offer members of the public, children, young people and families using services, service providers, and staff working in health and social care 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 by staff working with children in health and social care services.

We welcome your feedback on each of the sections in the draft national standards on or before **5pm on Thursday, 28 October 2021**. 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 us at: standards@hiqa.ie.

Alternatively, you can complete and post the completed form to us at the Smithfield offices, details can be found at www.hiqa.ie. If you require any further information please contact the HIQA Standards Team by emailing us at 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 and the MHC will also be running focus groups to further inform the development of these standards.

The consultation feedback form is available [online](#) or in [PDF format](#).